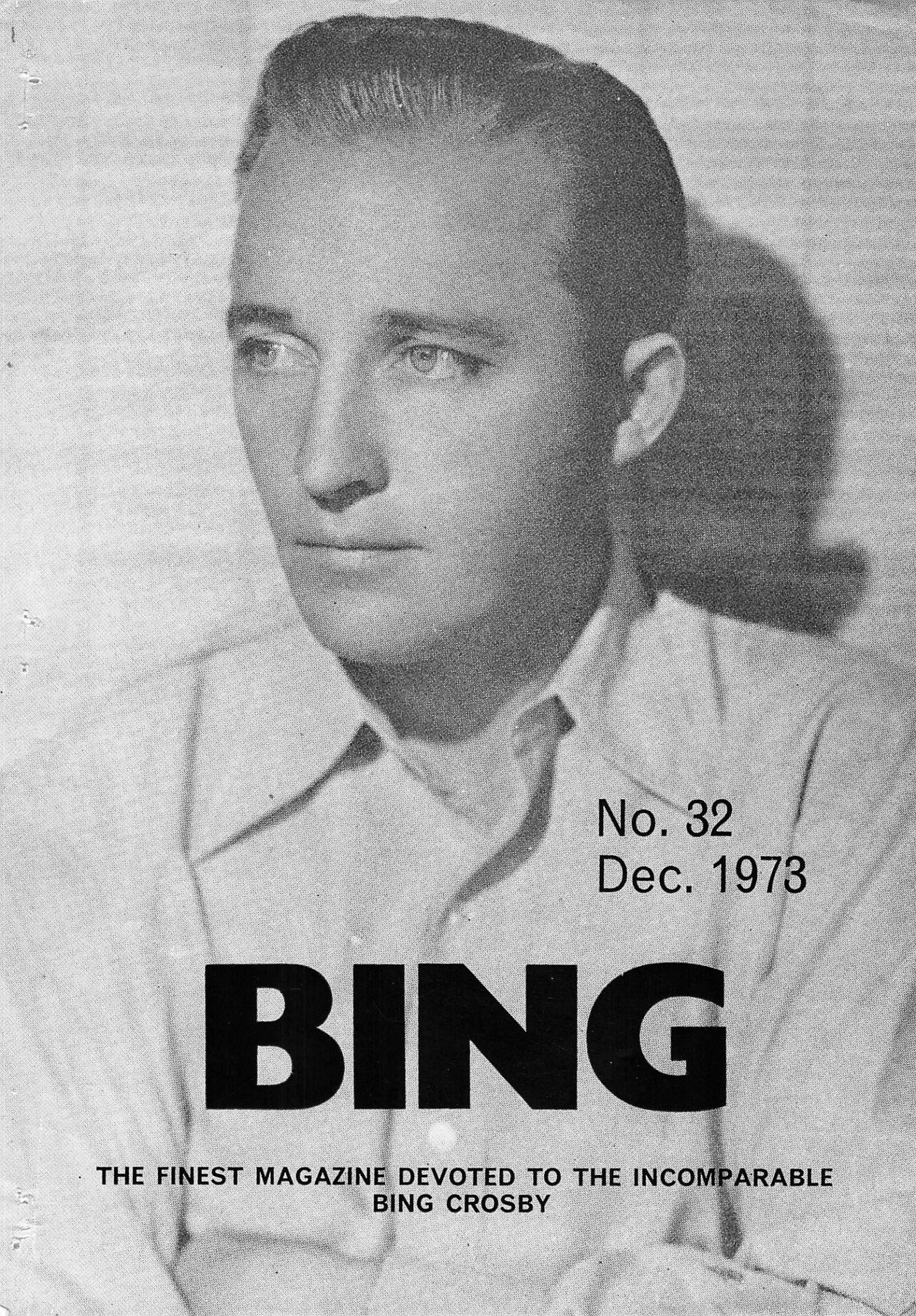

No. 32
Dec. 1973

BING

THE FINEST MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INCOMPARABLE
BING CROSBY

ISSUE 32

BING

DEC. 1973

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BING CROSBY

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"BING"

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BING CROSBY'S

1973 Christmas Message

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

My best Christmas greetings to all our club members. May they live long and prosper.

We plan on spending the season at home. Our youngsters make their own ornaments and do all the tree decorating. It can be quite unusual!

On the big day all are bundled off to Church first thing and then it's a scramble. Our relatives come by for the dinner, and a community sing follows.

So be merry!

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EDITORIAL

As the Festive Season descends upon us, we have the pleasure once again of offering our special December issue of "BING" for your personal delectation. The attention of all readers is drawn to the following pages on which we have important announcements to make:

Page 4 "THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY" now available!

Page 14 THE OFFICIAL ICC TAPE now available!

Page 38 ALTERNATE 'TAKE' NOTES: "Soft Lights And Sweet Music"

....it's enough to make you choke on your Christmas pud, isn't it? As the song goes, "You've Never Had It So Good".... Prepare yourself, then, for a "sparkling treasure of entertainment pleasure" (to quote the cover of "BING" No.20) as we bring you the very latest news concerning our favourite 72-year-old 'Rhythm Boy'.

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

from JOHN BASSETT and REG BRISTO

A WORD TO NEW READERS

The INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE (ICC), originally founded in 1950 as the 'British Bing Club' (BBC) before becoming the 'British Crosby Society' (BCS), is a rapidly expanding organisation with hundreds of members both in this country and abroad. A printed leaflet fully describing the aims and activities of the ICC is available from the Editor. (S.A.E. or stamp appreciated).

On behalf of all members,

the ICC

wishes

BING, KATHRYN, MARY FRANCES, HARRY and NATHANIEL CROSBY

a

HOLY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS

"THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY"

Now Available!

The Bing Crosby LP-Ography is the first of its kind issued to Crosby collectors anywhere and comprises a representative listing of the majority of Bing's LP releases issued since the early 1950's. All known re-issues and overseas equivalents are shown where applicable and the entire booklet is enclosed in an attractive, glossy wrap-round cover. Bing himself has kindly written the Introduction.

The price of this book is £1 (including postage). All orders (with full remittance) should be sent directly to Reg Bristo, 7 Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran, Monmouthshire, NP4 3NR. Please make all cheques, postal orders and IMO's payable to the International Crosby Circle.

Orders will be dealt with as quickly as possible before Christmas, priority being given to members whose names appear on our reservation file. Avoid the risk of Christmas postal delays by sending your remittance immediately upon receipt of this magazine.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT (See also page 38)

In the last issue of this magazine, Bert Bishop asked the question: "Can it be that there is an alternate 'take' in existence of the rarest of Bing's commercial recordings?" Bert was referring to the legendary "Soft Lights And Sweet Music" from 'FACE THE MUSIC MEDLEY', recorded 8th March, 1932. The answer is YES. Take -C has been used on the first of the BIOGRAPH releases, entitled "BING CROSBY - RARE EARLY RECORDINGS" (BLP C-13). This incredible discovery is already astounding collectors throughout America where the record is now available. ICC members are strongly urged to obtain a copy of this first release by writing in the first instance to Dave Carey, "The Swing Shop", 1b Mitcham Lane, Streatham, London, S.W.16. Dave is an agent for BIOGRAPH and he has advised the ICC that he will be stocking this first release. Stateside members can deal directly with BIOGRAPH RECORDS, Inc., P.O. Box 109, Canaan, New York, 12029, USA.

Titles are as follows:-

My kinda love (401562-C)
Let's do it (147536-5)
I'm in seventh heaven (148183-3)
Great day (149124-3)
Face the Music medley (11416-C)
Brother, can you spare a dime? (12502-A)
Street of dreams (12706-A)
I've got the world on a string (12991-A)
My honey's lovin' arms (12992-B)
Someone stole Gabriel's horn (13149-A)
Stay on the right side of the road (13150-A)
Blue prelude (B791-B)
There's a cabin in the pines (B804-A)

MOST SUCCESSFUL SOLO RECORDING ARTISTE

Reprinted from the October 1973 "GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS"

On 9th June 1960 the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce presented Harry Lillis (alias Bing) Crosby, Jnr. (born 2nd May 1904* at Tacoma, Washington) with a platinum disc to commemorate a sale of 200,000,000 records from the 2,600 singles and 125 albums he had recorded. On 15th September 1970 he received a second platinum disc for selling 300,650,000 discs with Decca. It was then estimated that his global life-time sales on 88 labels in 28 countries totalled, according to his royalty reports, 362,000,000. His first commercial recording was "I've Got The Girl" recorded on 18th October 1926 (master number W142785 (Take -3) issued on the Columbia label). The greatest collection of Crosbyana by Mr. Bob Roberts of Chatham, Kent includes 1,677 records.

****

*1901, as everyone should now know! The ICC was responsible for the entry relating to our Publicity Officer, Bob Roberts.

A STROKE OF LUCK

by LESLIE GAYLOR

At noon on Thursday, October 11th, a fellow workmate of mine, who is keen on studying 'form' and enjoys betting to quite some extent, approached me with a surprising remark: "I see your mate's here, then".

"Where?" I asked. He replied that there was a mention in the 'SUN' newspaper of Bing being at the Lingfield Horse Race Meeting on October 10th. I looked at my own copy of the paper but could see no mention of this, so I returned to my friend and said, "Here, show me where you saw that piece" and sure enough there was a little mention about half-an-inch wide in one of the columns.

This set me wondering where exactly Lingfield was located, and my mind was working overtime trying to decide what to do. Shortly after 6 p.m. that evening I wrote a letter to Bob Roberts, telling him what had appeared in the 'SUN' and likewise to "PARKINSON" TV producer, Richard Drewett. Then a little later I telephoned Bert Bishop to tell him the news and we arranged to help each other should either of us obtain any positive information.

I said to Bert, "I wonder if Bing's at the Connaught?" and he suggested that the Dorchester might also be worth trying. Bert agreed to make the necessary enquiries so we left matters at that.

At about 10 p.m. a knock came at my door from a lady who lives across the road in the sub post office. She explained that there was a 'phone call for me. On reaching the telephone and picking up the receiver, I was thrilled to hear Bert's voice on the line. He uttered the magic words...."I've located Bing....he's staying at the Connaught Hotel", and I was at a loss at that particular moment to tell him what my next move would be. It all seemed to happen so suddenly!

Back home, I sat and studied the rail, boat and bus timetables that would enable me to get to London. I then decided to telephone the reception desk at the hotel and ask if Bing would be staying there throughout the following day (Friday), as I didn't want to travel to London if he was leaving for home.

"Just hold on a minute", the voice at the other end replied, and after some crackling on the line I found myself talking to Bing himself who said, "I'm in bed with a cold".

To talk to Bing at this late hour was not my plan at all, but he was quite nice about it and told me that he would be leaving the hotel at 10.30 the next morning to go to the airport. He added, "I'll be back next spring", and I more or less conveyed to him that I would hope to see him then, being as 10.30 a.m. was giving me a tight schedule to work to.

I then 'phoned Bert with this news and we were both a little disappointed. I told him that Bing had mentioned that he had simply come in on a quick visit.

Whilst still in a flutter, I finally decided at 12.45 a.m. that I would take a chance and go to London, noting that the earliest I could get there would be 9 a.m. at Waterloo Station. I went to bed and awoke at 4.30 a.m. hoping to be lucky enough to see Bing. I caught a bus from Newport, my home town, at 6.05 a.m. which took me to Ryde from whence the boat left for Portsmouth at 6.45 a.m. Luckily, it was a bright moonlit morning with a little wind which helped to keep any fog away. A foggy morning can delay the boat traffic from the Isle of Wight. I caught a train from Portsmouth to London, arriving at 9 a.m. and then hurried to the underground station to go to Oxford Street. From there I practically ran all the way to the Connaught and arrived at the hotel at about 9.35 a.m.

The receptionist was most co-operative and telephoned Bing for me. He then told me, "Mr. Crosby will be down to see you in a minute or so".

Suddenly, Bing appeared and handed over his room keys. He then moved to another part of the desk and signed what looked like a cheque. The time came for him to see me, and it was just 'out of this world'. He was extremely nice and pleasant as always, and signed two copies of his new 'Daybreak' single for me, plus one or two other items. Bing held his raincoat over his arm all the time as he awaited his taxi to the airport. After a little chat, Bing said, "I've just got to see these two people for an interview", and I observed a woman reporter in the company of a press photographer. Bing sat with them and answered various questions. When the interview was over Bing introduced

me to them, and I asked who would be printing the write-up. They replied that the 'DAILY EXPRESS' would carry the report. When Bing told them my name the lady said, "I'm Judith Simons" and turning to Bing she said, "Every time I write something about you I hear from this gentleman!" This was quite true, of course, as over the years I had often written to Judith.

She also said to Bing, "I've still got all of his letters", and Bing smiled, especially when I commented, "There you are, Bing....that proves I help to keep the 'plugs' going for you!"

Someone approached Bing to say that his taxi had arrived so we all walked outside for Bing to have his photograph taken, as no pictures were allowed in the hotel. Seeing this going on I asked Judith Simons if I could have my picture taken with Bing and she readily agreed. Bing exclaimed, "Yes....I must have one with my representative!" and I certainly felt a very happy individual.

Just as Bing climbed into the taxi at 10.15, I shook hands with him and he said, "I'll be back next spring".

As I watched the taxi pull away carrying Bing's two suitcases I thought very highly of the great man....he really had made my day. After some conversation with Judith Simons she said, "What a nice man he is", and she promised to send a copy of the photograph to me.

I would like to close here by adding that when I told Bing I had risen from bed at 4.30 a.m. he laughed and said, "You shouldn't have got up that early just to come and see me!" I convinced him that it was all worthwhile.

So after a great time, what else can I say but thanks to my 'betting' workmate and a million thanks to Bert Bishop for his telephone call.

==========

KNOW YOUR LYRICS!

No prizes given but can you name the song (other than Bing's signature tune!) in which he sings of the "blue of her eyes and the gold of her hair"?

Also, try guessing the songs in which Bing's "fresh out of syllables" and "run out of string". You'll find the answers at the foot of page 37.

==========

An ideal stocking filler....

THE GUNN REPORT Many hundreds of 78's and occasional LP's for sale in each issue, including JAZZ, DANCE BANDS, BRASS BANDS, PERSONALITY, VOCAL, LIGHT ORCHESTRAL, BING, etc. In addition, there are articles, comment, information and advice....all presented in an inimitable and light-hearted style. Accept a FREE SAMPLE COPY and full details of subscriptions by writing to: JOHN GUNN, 15 LYNTON ROAD, HADLEIGH, BENFLEET, ESSEX.

THE "BING" TAPE SERVICE by BOB ROBERTS

Operating in conjunction with the ICC, the "BING" Tape Service provides all members with the unique opportunity of acquiring high quality tapes of virtually anything ever sung or spoken by Bing Crosby, whether it be from radio, television, films, records, etc. Strict legal copyright clauses appertain to private tape recording for obvious reasons, but these special facilities are available via the ICC without offence to anyone. Hundreds of collectors will testify to the fact that this is the best means by which to acquire rare items of Crosbyana. Tapes are available at a choice of speed and spool size to suit the facilities of each member.

For further information about material available, please send a 3p stamp or S.A.E. to:

BOB ROBERTS (ICC Publicity Officer)
56 Thorold Road
Chatham, KENT.

==========

KEEPING TRACK

BERT BISHOP, 'WIG' WIGGINS and JOHN BASSETT review the latest record releases featuring Bing Crosby.

As each new quarterly magazine approaches, a big question mark hangs over the 'current activities' sections with regard to whether there is going to be anything to write about or report upon. Fortunately, Bing still continues to make news, appear on our TV screens and on radio, and, more specifically to this section, continues to make gratifying appearances on an ever increasing variety of labels covering not only his commercial recordings nut also his vast output of radio, TV and film activities. Let us hope that this happy trend maintains a permanent section for the magazine.

****

The news of two more, quite new, 'Coral' issues of Bing - bringing the total in this series to seven - is of paramount importance and reportage insofar as ICC members and appreciators of the Crosby sound during his peak period are concerned; certainly no one in the ICC should fail to add at least one copy of each to their collections!

This is the time of year for hints to the family where Christmas presents are concerned and in my own case these two LP's will (I hope!) be conspicuous among the gay wrappings of that joyous morn. It follows then, that I haven't got these records yet and in consequence I am gratefully indebted to Edward Hale (Highbury, London) for the factual information concerning them. So let us proceed to the main business - titles and contents.

"BING CROSBY AND THE ANDREWS SISTERS" - Volume 3 (Coral CPS 112)

There's no business like show business
Tallahassee
Apalachicola FLA
Life is so peculiar
High on the list
I'll si-si ya in Bahia
Cool water
South Rampart St. Parade
The live oak tree
Is you is, or is you ain't
There's a fella waiting in Poughkeepsie
Ac-cent-tchu-ate the positive
You don't have to know the language
Anything you can do

"DAY DREAMING" (Coral CPS 113)

Day dreaming
You are the one
Between a kiss and a sigh
I'm building a sailboat of dreams
Wrap your troubles in dreams
The waltz of memory
Do you care?
Somebody loves me
Darling, je vous aime beaucoup
You and I
Don't break the spell
Maybe
I'd know you anywhere
Miss you

The first thing that is immediately apparant is the fact that there are 14 tracks on each record and that they are in enhanced stereo. The extra two tracks per disc come as a welcome bonus; except that we can assume that this is the last of the Andrews Sisters LP's: there could have been four, as Bing cut 48 tracks with the girls, if you count three duets he made with Patty Andrews. Coming back to Vol.3 we find that three of the titles are quite new to microgroove: track 1 (side 1) and tracks 1 and 7 (side 2). The 'Show Business' title features a fourth singer, popular in the forties - Dick Haymes, and along with "Anything you can do" represents probably the two best numbers from one of Irving Berlin's greatest scores which was for the show 'ANNIE GET YOUR GUN'. Although treated with some levity by Bing, the girls and Dick Haymes, the lack of pomposity adds a new dimension to the song which really requires a full stage production to be put over as intended. This 'levity' is a feature of all the Crosby/Andrews Sisters' recordings and undoubtably accounts for their popularity. Several of the songs are from the films 'MR. MUSIC', 'HERE COME THE WAVES' and 'JUST FOR YOU'; although the Andrews Sisters did not appear in any of these pictures. On the 5th September 1952, Bing went to the recording studios with the Andrews Sisters for the last time, and with Matty Matlock and his Orchestra cut "South Rampart St, Parade" and, finally, "Cool Water". It had been a tuneful tie-up lasting 13 years and this album

is quite representative of an unchanging style that the foursome perfected from the word go.

There is always the possibility that some of the remaining 10 tracks featuring all four artistes that have not been issued on the three 'BING CROSBY AND THE ANDREWS SISTERS' volumes will appear on a 'whispered' Coral project entitled 'BING AND THE GIRLS'. However, there are so many candidates for such an album that this, too, could develop into a series of volumes - if we're lucky!

For most Crosby buffs the 'DAY DREAMING' LP is an even more fascinating prospect for there must be many a collector who lacks several of the delectable titles featured hereon. As far as I have been able to ascertain, only tracks 1, 3, 5 and 7 on side 2 have been issued on microgroove before. 10 tracks then, new to LP, and in 'stereo'. All these songs were recorded by Bing between 1939 and 1942; definately peak years for many Crosby fans, and although some of the numbers never made it as 'standards' in the most popular sense, few would deny the special quality that Bing brings to them. The collection is well titled, all the songs having an 'ethereal' quintessence within the melody or lyric. Victor Young accompanies Bing on the title tune, and 1, 3 and 5 on side 2, whilst Harry Sosnick and his Orchestra does the honours on "Do you care"; the remaining accompaniment being by John Scott Trotter. I guarantee that this will be a well-played album in many members' homes over the next month or so ....better buy a couple of copies! At 94p they are extraordinarily good value.

Edward Hale sent me a sketch of the covers which shows CPS 112 as being predominantly red, yellow and green in colour and featuring a centrally placed, contemporary photograph of, from the left, the Andrews Sisters, Bing and a studio technician holding what appears to be a 'cue card'. A microphone hangs suspended between the vocalists, with Bing in his usual recording style dishabillé.

The 'DAY DREAMING' cover shows Bing in more pensive mood, a studio photograph that is apposite to the implication of the title. The background is scumbled in red, and the red wording of the title and Bing's name sets boldly against a striped yellow top third of the front sleeve. Right from the start, Coral have been very gay in their sleeve presentation and these latest releases continue the pattern.

****

BROADWAY RECORDS - by all appearances another 'pirate' label - have assembled 15 rare selections by the Goldkette and Whiteman orchestras on an album entitled "THE UNHEARD BIX" (Broadway 102) and sub-titled "An Extraordinary Album of the Rarest Recordings involving Bix Beiderbecke". Of American origin the LP provides us with three previously unissued masters by Bing as indicated below:

Side One: Idolizing (previously unissued)
Proud of a baby like you
I'm looking over a four leaf clover (prev.unissued)
Look at the world and smile (prev.unissued) Take-1
Look at the world and smile (prev.unissued) Take-3
In my merry oldsmobile
In my merry oldsmobile (prev.unissued) Take-2

Side Two: Smile (prev.unissued) Take-1
Smile (prev.unissued) Take-4
When
My pet (prev.unissued) Take-3 Bing vocal
It was the dawn of love (prev.unissued) Take-1 Bing vocal
It was the dawn of love (prev.unissued) Take-3 Bing vocal
You took advantage of me ('Stellar Dance Orchestra')
Waiting at the end of the road (previously issued on 78 rpm and more recently on Italian 'RARETONE' RTR 24008) Bing vocal

Side one is devoted to recordings made in 1926 and 1927 by the Jean Goldkette Orchestra, whilst side two features Paul Whiteman's Orchestra from the period of 1928 to 1929. An elusive recording of "You took advantage of me" is included on this side, as originally featured by the Stellar Dance Orchestra on Australian 'REGAL' label. This controversial item was mentioned by contemporary discographer Charles Delauney as being the Paul Whiteman Orchestra featuring Bix Beiderbecke, but at the time of this recording the Whiteman band

was between Victor and Columbia recording contracts (4th May, 1928 - matrix 146232-3). Apart from some rare vocalising by Bing, jazz buffs will delight at the playing of Venuti and Lang, the Dorsey Brothers, and Frankie Trumbauer, to name a few of the artistes highlighted on this limited edition album. The record can be obtained for $6 (including postage and packing) from Stan Hester, P.O. Box 244, Milford, Michigan, 48042, USA.

****

With members throughout the world constantly scanning the record shelves for even the briefest glimpse of Bing we really shouldn't miss out on much within these columns, especially as most members are keen to report their 'finds' for the benefit of us all. In this particular case my thanks are due to Peter Diffley who very kindly took the trouble to 'phone me whilst even the first track was spinning, to acquaint me with his unusual discovery! He advised me that whilst browsing among the bizarre labels that lurked within a cut-price corner shop in Cale Green, Cheshire ('Records from 35p' read the whitewash legend on the window) he saw the beaming physiognomies of Bing and Louis Armstrong colourfully blazened across a sleeve that held an LP entitled "LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND BING CROSBY 'ON STAGE'" on WINDMILL label, catalogue number WMD 190 (mono), and the package was priced at 60p! He was soon back next day bagging what proved to be the only remaining copy, for 'yours truly' who gratefully received it a couple of days later.

By now it had been established that this was a UK version (almost) of "LOUIS ARMSTRONG & BING CROSBY LIVE" on FAMILY SFR-DP 655 that had been fully reviewed in "BING"-30. Readers of that review and purchasers of the record will be aware that this LP was of extremely poor quality with regard to fidelity, so my anticipation of a different twelve bob record sleeve and label to mull over was more than fulfilled when upon playing the LP I discovered that this issue was superior to the original release. The fidelity after the first four tracks is not good but at least the subsequent ones are recognisable where Bing is concerned, which on the FAMILY label had Bing sounding like a boy soprano! The tracks on which Bing may be heard singing with infectious enthusiasm are:

Lazybones (with Louis Armstrong)
My honey's lovin' arms (with Velma Middleton)
Lazybones (different version with Armstrong)
Blueberry Hill (with Louis Armstrong)
(plus various spoken introductions to other tracks; refer to "BING"-30 for full details)

Whilst we were fortunate in getting the Italian sleeve notes translated from the original issue, in this case the fairly knowlegeable write-up on the LP cover is in English, and if we may believe what is printed here the recordings are selections from performances in New York on February 16th and 21st, 1949. The precise venue being stated as unknown. Reference is made to all the films that Bing and Louis appeared in together, including one in 1947 entitled 'NEW ORLEANS' - 'a highly romanticized Hollywood attempt to tell the story of the birth and up-river development of jazz'. Well, I thought I knew most of my Bing films, but I've never heard of this one, and unless I'm seriously adrift somewhere neither has anyone else! It doesn't even relate to 'BIRTH OF THE BLUES' of 1941 vintage and which didn't feature Louis Armstrong anyway.

The front sleeve pictures are well-drawn, straight cartoons of the two main participants - Bing gazing left-three-quarter profile over Louis' right shoulder. They should be well-drawn as the one of Bing is a reversed reproduction of the arty-crafty 'photo-painting' that features on the front of 'BING 'N' BASIE', which looks like a painting but is most assuredly a photographic art form. In this case, the WINDMILL cover version is a line drawing with a few alterations by way of hat and clothing colour and style: pirate label indeed! And speaking of the label, the insignia is a simple illustration of a four-vaned mill separating the words WIND and MILL, all being enclosed within a propellor shaped outline.

For further details of all the tracks please refer to the June issue of this magazine where it will be noted that Louis Armstrong plays, speaks and sings "Happy Birthday" in honour of Bing. That track is deleted from the WINDMILL issue but in all other respects it is the same as regards content.

Therefore, at 60p, as against the original £2, the superior WINDMILL release is a good buy - of you can find one! Apparantly their normal outlet is super-markets and it is most unlikely that a normal record shop will stock these, but everything's worth a try.

****

A two-LP set is now on sale in the States (album title and catalogue number unknown at time of going to press) comprising a collection of various 'fluffs' and 'bloopers' made by artistes and announcers on radio and television over the years. Bing is on there, ad-libbing his way through the famous unissued 'take' of "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams", which I'm sure most, if not all members will have on tape in their collections. For those who don't, Bing very ably finishes of a badly rehearsed recording of this number by inventing his own lyrics in perfect 'off-the-cuff' rhyme, as follows:

"He cut out eight bars, the dirty ********,
an' I didn't know which eight bars he was gonna cut.
Why don't somebody tell me these things around here,
**** ******, I'm going off my nut!"

The album sells for $5 and in our February 1974 issue we hope to give this album a more detailed review.

****

In deference to the Christmas season it should be noted that PYE, who have taken over the distribution of DAYBREAK from POLYDOR, have re-issued the LP "A TIME TO BE JOLLY" on DAL 2007. As far as is known the recording is identical to the original release, except for the minor differences to be found on the rear of the sleeve in relation to the company name, etc. Edward Hale also tells me that "White Christmas" is likely to be re-issued again this year as a 45 'single' (backing unknown) by Decca on 'MCA' label. As I write this in mid-November precise details of Christmas releases remain unknown or are based upon reports of hopeful speculation.

Before leaving DAYBREAK, take a look at the recent Bing 'single' of "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree"....what's so special about this? You may well ask! Just hold the disc up in front of a bright light and you will be in for a surprise. This bizarre information reaches me via our Editor, John, who examines his records with a vigilence that transcends mere, run-of-the-mill collectors such as myself, and would do justice to the famous occupant of 221b Baker Street!

****

From Colin Pugh comes the gen that PARAMOUNT (UK) have released an album on SFPL 290 featuring all the soundtrack music taken from the film 'PAPER MOON'. It would seem that Bing's commercial recording of "Just One More Chance" is played in this film, which has its setting in the year 1936 and stars Ryan O'Neill and his 10-year-old daughter, for this is one of the tracks on the LP - titled the same as the film. Price of this one? About £2.14. By the time you read this review the film will have already had its Charity Premier in London....why not go along and see it?

****

September's "BING" mistakenly reported that three 'ONLY FOR COLLECTORS' LP's had Bing tracks on them. In fact, OFC 22's version of "My Pet" - although Beiderbecke - is non-Bing! However, OFC 12 and OFC 34 really do feature early Crosby/Beiderbecke recordings. Sorry, folks!

****

One of our Stateside contacts has secured a copy of "GOLDEN AGE OF OPERA" EJS 120, on which Bing sings two duets with Enzio Pinza. From the titles I would hazard a pretty certain guess that they are air-shots from PHILCO RADIO TIME, 13th November 1946 on which Enzio Pinza guested. Members with tape dubbings of this programme may recall that they sang "The Timber Trail" and a parody of "You Are My Sunshine" together. These are the titles on this new (?) American release, which may be another difficult one to nail down. Price may fluctuate according to your source of supply.

****

Writing of radio programmes tunes us neatly into TOTEM which is, as far as I'm aware, a new record company who have so far produced five LP's, three of which are Bing. The company is Canadian based and, in fact, the records are made there. They are, quite simply, complete radio shows including commercials. The ones we are concerned with being:

TOTEM LP 1002 "PHILCO RADIO TIME" October 16th, 1946: Bing Crosby and his guest Bob Hope with John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra and chorus, the Charioteers, Lina Romay and Skitch Henderson.
backed by: February 19th, 1947: Bing with guests Judy Garland, Leo McCary and William Frawley.

TOTEM LP 1003 "PHILCO RADIO TIME" March 5th, 1947: Bing with Al Jolson.
backed by: April 2nd, 1947: The famous 'minstrel' broadcast with Bing, Jolson and John Charles Thomas.

TOTEM LP 1004 "LUX RADIO THEATRE" November 8th, 1937: "She Loves Me Not" starring Bing, Joan Blondell, Nan Grey, Sterling Holloway and William Frawley.

The four PHILCO RADIO TIME shows (two per disc) run for half-an-hour each whereas the LUX RADIO THEATRE show occupies both sides of the LP. The fidelity of these albums is truly excellent; faithful in pitch and as clear as a bell. But if you have these shows on tape they come a little pricey at £2.85 UK price - if you don't own a tape recorder then they can be thoroughly recommended as the particular shows that have been committed to disc are first rate entertainment indeed.

The TOTEM insignia represents a symbolic bord-god of the type that one might find on a quasi, ethnic tribe in either of the North or South American continents. Apart from the show, date, and country of origin, it is the only adornment on the yellow record label. However, the information on the sleeve is quite copious, informative and nostalgic. The sleeves are set out as publicity advertisements which portend to draw one's attention to a forthcoming radio programme of the very day - there is a dotted line square advertising the show which, it is suggested, should be clipped out and placed on the radio as a reminder to tune in! Either someone at TOTEM has a keen sense of window dressing or else these sleeves are facsimiles of some advertisement from a journal of the time. The sleeves are of varying yellows with deep, blue-black lettering. All are illustrated with photographs of Bing and some of the other artistes: 1002 featuring a very nice, and quite large, picture of Bing standing before an ABC microphone - head and shoulders only.

The records are currently available (at the time of writing) from Dave Carey at the "Swing Shop", and from the stockists in the US - Ray Avery Rare Records, at $4.50 each (about £1.80) plus postage in both instances. It is worth noting that all the LP's feature a 'Limited Edition for Collectors Only' imprint on the sleeve (so often found on obscure labels nowadays), and one feels an impulse to support such high quality recordings; the only question is, where is it all going to end? With unlimited funds an almost unlimited supply would be very welcome: maybe the best course is to be selective in one's choice according to the guests for it can scarcely be denied that Bing's contribution remains of a high standard throughout.

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A further STAR-TONE release (ST 212) brings one Rhythm Boys track, "So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together", on an LP entitled "A HANDFUL OF HARMONY". As all previous STAR-TONE's have featured air-shot recordings I think that it can safely be assumed that this track falls into the same category - which makes it an interesting proposition as, personally, I have no knowledge of any such dubbing; unless it is from the soundtrack of 'KING OF JAZZ', which although not an air-shot, of course, has not been issued on a commercial basis previously. STAR-TONE albums are available from Ray Avery in the States, and in some cases from the Harlequin record stores in the UK. Price is the same as for the TOTEM LP's.

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Finally, for this quarter, another album in the 'air-shot' category has appeared in the States entitled "WORLD WAR TWO" on a label with an 'HIS' prefix called HISTORY IN SOUND. At least one of the tracks thereon features Bing, singing an interesting little number entitled "A cranky old Yank in a cranky old tank".....and at this stage that's all the information we have for you! Keep an eye on February's "BING" for the necessary details of price and source of availability.

THE LAST ROUND-UP

A simplified listing of each record reviewed in this month's 'KEEPING TRACK' columns now follows. It is requested that when writing to recommended addresses that you mention the ICC and "BING" magazine.

(1) "BING CROSBY AND THE ANDREWS SISTERS" Vol. 3 (Coral CPS 112). Available from all leading record shops throughout the UK, price approx. 94p.

(2) "DAY DREAMING" (Coral CPS 113). As item (1).

(3) "THE UNHEARD BIX" (Broadway 102). Available from Stan Hester, P.O. Box 244, Milford, Michigan, 48042, USA. Price $6 (including p & p).

(4) "LOUIS ARMSTRONG & BING CROSBY 'ON STAGE'" (Windmill WMD 190). Available from supermarkets, although acquisition is likely to prove difficult. Price approx. 60p.

(5) 2-LP set of 'Fluffs' and 'Bloopers' now available in the States for $5. Refer to our next issue of "BING" for additional information.

(6) "A TIME TO BE JOLLY" (Pye-Daybreak DAL 2007). Available from all leading record shops throughout the UK, at normal retail price.

(7) "WHITE CHRISTMAS" (Decca 'MCA' 45 'single'). Expected release.

(8) "PAPER MOON" (Paramount SFPL 290). Available from all leading record shops throughout the UK, price approx. £2.14.

(9) "GOLDEN AGE OF OPERA" (EJS 120). Recent US release (?) - further details unknown.

(10) "PHILCO RADIO TIME" (Totem LP 1002). Available from Dave Carey, "The Swing Shop", 1b Mitcham Lane, Streatham, London, S.W.16, (Price about £1.80), and from Ray Avery, "Rare Records", 417 East Broadway, Glendale, California, 91205, USA, (Price $4.50).

(11) "PHILCO RADIO TIME" (Totem LP 1003). As item (10).

(12) "LUX RADIO THEATRE" (Totem LP 1004). As items (10) and (11).

(13) "A HANDFUL OF HARMONY" (Star-Tone ST 212). Available from Ray Avery (see item (10) for address) or "Harlequin Records", 60 Dean Street, London, W.1. Price approx. £1.80 ($4.50).

(14) "WORLD WAR TWO" (History In Sound 'HIS' prefix). Refer to our next issue of "BING" for additional information.

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The following item extracted from 'TV GUIDE' (America's Television Magazine) appears by courtesy of 'Wig' Wiggins:-

BING CROSBY will be b-b-back with what NBC says is his 38th annual Christmas show - if you include both radio and TV - a Family Theatre special. Besides his wife Kathryn Grant and their three children, the crooner's guests will include Connie Stevens, John Byner, iceskater John Misha Petkevich and Michael Landon, who used to spend yuletide on the Ponderosa....

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"GOLDEN YEARS" is edited by the ICC's secretary, REG BRISTO, and is considered by many to be the finest magazine in its field, covering every aspect of the 'Golden Era' of Dance Bands. Write to Reg for further information - or send 25p for a sample copy.

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SO YOU THINK YOU CAN SING LIKE BING?

ICC Competition Results

(Obviously, a lot of you don't!)

This is one of those unfortunate occasions when lack of response has compelled us to 'bend the rules' of our competition in order to arrive at three entries which can be placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Originally we requested that competitors should sing the three songs as featured by Bing in the Christmas '72 "PARKINSON" show, namely "Ben Bolt", "One Fleeting Hour" and "Rover". Instead of the expected avalanche of tapes (containing what we hoped would be brilliant 'take-offs' of Bing's vocalising!) we received no more than three tapes, one of which did not feature the relevent songs, but the competitor compensated for this omission by warbling his way through no fewer than 50 other songs, all of which were listed in "BING"-31.

Of the two entries which were eligible, it is our considered opinion that Bert Bishop's attempts at capturing the unique characteristics of Bing's dulcit tones were considerably noteworthy. Not only did he ably sing the three songs as requested but also introduced each one, verbatim, as Bing had done on the show. A wonderful effort indeed, and we were delighted to award Bert the second prize of an acetate pressing of "Music hath charms" from the 'KING OF JAZZ' soundtrack. Edward Hale, whose work 'behind the scenes' has proved invaluable to the ICC this year, gave us a very pleasant surprise by 'duetting' with Bing on each of the three songs. As a token of our appreciation we have awarded him a taped selection of early Bing material from the 1927-28 Paul Whiteman period.

And now we must explain our decision to alter the rules, thereby awarding the first prize to Richard Lillico, our 'marathon' Bing stylist! The first part of his prize consists of a free copy of each of the following items:- (a) "THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY", (b) "THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY" and (c) the OFFICIAL ICC TAPE. Richard, a commercial traveller who lives in Northumberland, finds plenty of time between calls to perfect his Crosby impersonations, but - as he stressed in the last issue - he has never sung in public in his life! In September he sent us a 71 minute tape containing no fewer than 50 songs, and at that time we had to admit that his impersonation abilities were truly remarkable. Even Bing, to whom a dubbing was sent, commented upon the close similarity! But if that wasn't the end of the matter, we recently received a second tape from Richard, this time containing 56 more songs on which his resemblance to Bing was even greater than before!

After much consultation, bearing in mind the original requirements of the competition, we finally decided to place Richard in first place as the ICC member who sounds most like Bing....and he retains this honour until someone else can prove otherwise. As the second part of his prize we are giving his voice its first public hearing!....working from the total of 106 songs we have compiled a small tape comprising a selection of 10 titles, and we are offering this unique tape to members for the modest price of 30p (including postage).

The tape is recorded two-track ('1-4' on four-track machines) at $3\frac{3}{4}$ i.p.s. and details are as follows:-

'DICK SINGS BING'

It's easy to remember
I dream of Jeannie
Let's take the long way home
Sleepy time gal
It could happen to you
Ave Maria
Mississippi mud
Out of nowhere
As long as I'm dreaming
Blue Hawaii

To obtain your copy, please complete the order form below on both sides, and return it to the address indicated.

THE OFFICIAL ICC TAPE

Taking the place of the LP record (the subject of discussion earlier this year in "BING"), we have pleasure in making the following tape available to ICC members:-

SIDE ONE

(a) Bing's Message to the BRITISH CROSBY SOCIETY, 1956
(by courtesy of Stan White)

(b) Bing's Message to the BRITISH CROSBY SOCIETY, 1957
(by courtesy of Dorothy Hardiman)

(c) Bing's Message to the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, 1963
(by courtesy of Frank Murphy)

(d) Bing's Message to the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, 1965
(by courtesy of Frank Murphy)

(e) Bing's Message to the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, 1965
(by courtesy of Frank Murphy)

(f) Bing's Visit to Spokane:
(i) Arrival of Bing's plane
(ii) Harry Crosby's guitar solo
(iii) Gonzaga University intro.
(by courtesy of Don Denney and Johnny Jones)

SIDE TWO

(a) Bing's Gonzaga University Speech
(by courtesy of Don Denney and Johnny Jones)

(b) Bing's Message to the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, 1968
(by courtesy of Frank Murphy)

(c) Radio interview with Bing, 2nd August, 1972

(d) Radio interview with Bing in London, 1972

(e) Bing's Message to:
(i) The Empire Bingo Club, Northumberland
(ii) The 1930's Record Club
(iii) The INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE in Northern Ireland, 1972
(by courtesy of Frank Murphy)

The tape is recorded two-track ('1-4' on four-track machines) at 3¾ i.p.s. (open reel). PRICE: 90p (including postage and packing).

Please note: Cassette tapes can be supplied by special arrangement, only where open reel machines are not available to members.

THAT OLD BING MAGIC: An analysis

by PETER DIFFLEY

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* SPECIAL *
* CHRISTMAS *
* FEATURE *
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INTRODUCTION:

Christmas 1973....any my thoughts slide back to Christmas 1972 when, as the ice spread its thin fingers over the windows and the gathering dusk encircled the deserted streets, I gazed disconsolately at the last (and empty) bottle of Taylors Vintage Reserve, and reflected upon Reg Bristo's article in the Christmas "BING", wherein he had indulged in some happy musings upon the festive season.

Readers of that fine issue may recall Reg remarking on how aptly Bing would have fitted into the Dickensian Christmas, frolicking with Mr. Wardle's merry gathering at Dingley Dell and burbling a happy roundelay over the Yuletide punch-bowl.

Yes, a prescient bird is Mr. Bristo (some believe he should have been christened 'Robin' rather than 'Reg') and as usual, he placed an unerring finger squarely on the nub, his mature reflections revealing an aspect of Bing normally taken for granted and yet of remarkable interest - viz. the universality and timelessness of his appeal. For the truth is that not only would Bing have fitted into the 19th century, he would equally have been at home as a jongleur of the 12th century, accompanying Richard the First to the Crusades, or as a 14th century Pilgrim travelling the Canterbury Road with Chaucer's jovial troupe, enlivening the familiar tales with a well turned song and a spot of light banter.

Indeed, there is no age in which we could not envisage Bing as being completely at home, saving only the latter part of our own 20th century, which, with its corrosive envy, rapacity, selfishness and violence (all stemming from the retreat from God) is indicative of the breakdown of civilised living, and in which one might expect Bing to stand somewhat aloof, immersing himself in the assurance of family, and other things dear to his heart.

Now, this ability to transcend time is an unmistakeable sign of greatness - a quality intangible and yet real; a quality which lifts a man above his fellows whilst at the same time allowing him to live and laugh with them on the same level. In other words, the ability to exercise a far-reaching enrichment of humanity whilst at the same time sharing it. And here we must beware profundity, for Mr. Crosby would bolt up the nearest escape road before the second syllable of the word had darkened his auricular hat rests. Despite his quiet and unassuming erudition he would be vastly amused by the thought of any analysis in depth of his art.

Nonetheless, there are aspects of Bing that deserve study: a man who achieves such phenomenal success, who becomes walking history and a world-wide notability must surely possess certain qualities worthy of analysis, and I would suggest that a little prodding of the grey matter might produce some original observations on matters Crosby. We are too often content to simply lie back drifting comfortably along the soothing strains of "Sweet Leilani", so let us administer a crisp uppercut to the mental processes by making an effort to "Get up, get out and meet the Bing half-way". If the attempt crashes to earth in a jumble of ill-formed theories - who cares? At least the effort might spur the more knowledgeable Crosby follower to produce something of real worth in this field.

In any event, it is Christmas time, and if, regrettably, a man is too ancient to throw snowballs, why should he not throw theories? One of them might strike home, and anything is better than sinking to slippered ease in a morass of brandied Pudding. Or is it? Anyway, the first theory has been rounded and compressed, and lies tingling in the fingers, so let battle commence as follows....

Gratefully accepting the unique tone and power of the Crosby voice as an undisputed fact, and intending no irreverence to St. Paul, I would say that the Crosby magic is compounded of three elements - Rhythm, Phrasing and Personality, and the greatest of these is Personality.

RHYTHM:

Taking rhythm first, this is not, in itself, a rarity - Readers, without pausing for breath could undoubtedly reel off a score of rhythmically gifted artists

from Louis and Goodman down through the years to Django and even the current scene, but I would suggest that no single artist has ever possessed the superabundance of Rhythm that flows through the Crosby frame. The man is unable to talk except rhythmically; his speaking voice is simply an unaccompanied song that pleases by its constant variation of pitch, its inflection and the smoothness of its phrasing. His very movements are rhythmical - watch his films and note the shift of the head, the lift of an eyebrow, the shrug of the shoulders, even the search of the pockets; all these things, of no consequence in themselves, are infused with an unconscious rhythm that is natural to the man and which he can no more avoid than can Fred Astaire avoid floating through life with the casual elegance of a falling leaf.

It is, I believe, this innate sense of Rhythm that has largely contributed to the myth of laziness associated with Bing - a myth encouraged (in all honesty) by Bing himself - for the truth is that he is a man of immense activity, as patently revealed by the recent BBC saga. How then, did the myth arise? I would suggest that due to this superb sense of rhythm, paralleled by years of intense application and intelligent study of his art, Bing developed a magnitude of skill which in all his activities expresses itself as ECONOMY OF EFFORT, and it is precisely this economy of effort that has been mistaken for laziness.

To explain the term, I would define it as 'achieving the maximum effect with the minimum of effort' and would contend that this is the unmistakeable mark of the master craftsman in all walks of life. For example, it can be found in the music of Mozart - listen to the slow movement of almost any of his Piano Concertos and mark how with the use of a mere three or four notes he can produce a poignancy beyond utterance. In the literary field it may be found in the work of Shakespeare and Pope, or in contemporary times, that of Belloc and Wodehouse. In the cricket world it was enshrined in the bowling of Wilfred Rhodes, whose mere three or four paces and beguiling flight encompassed the downfall of over 4,000 batsmen. Look where you will in the field of human endeavour and you will find that although there is variance in the crafts, there is unity in the sign of the Master - economy of effort.

Reflection will, I believe, reveal that Bing's work undeniably places him in this elite corps of master craftsmen whose work is accomplished with an ease that disguises hardwon perfection of technique. Things come easily to Mr. Crosby - so easily that even he himself, with laudable modesty and completely overlooking the years of effort, cannot understand why the castle gates collapse before he has even put a shoulder to them. He accepts the crash of timber but is vaguely bewildered by it, and because he conquers thus, without apparent effort, he genuinely believes himself to be both lucky and lazy.

The truth is that so thoroughly has he mastered his art that this mastery has already extracted the bolts, hinges and padlocks BEFORE the first note has left the Crosby larynx en route to the castle gates. It is the hard won SKILL which has prepared the conquest, and the mellifluous VOICE which administers the coup d'etat. And (as so ably pointed out by Lee Argent - again in the Christmas '72 issue) it is this same mastery which enables him to stroll into the recording studio and in one session commit half a dozen songs to disc whilst the latest pop bellower, with his legions of engineers and technicians, toils several weeks to satisfactorily record a single number.

Naturally gifted? Of course he is, as are most master craftsmen, but such gifts do not manifest themselves. They lie in the quiet reaches of the soul and it is only by physical and mental effort that they are forcibly prised into the open. Most of us are far too idle to use the crowbar of effort (hence by being burdened with this article when better qualified Crosby men loaf by the crackling logs, wreathed in the blissful fumes of Hennessy XO and Hoyo de Montereys) and of those who do make the effort, few unearth anything more potent than nuggets of mediocrity, but they have at least made the effort! And that is the point - EFFORT! Michaelangelo did not loaf about, dreaming of what a great sculpturerhe could be - he seized a chunk of marble and a chisel and whacked his way to immortality. He WORKED. And so it is with Bing, with Fred Astaire and indeed with all gifted masters of professions - they work unbelievably hard to bring their natural gifts to perfect fruition: there are no Trade Union Rules in the Guild of the Great.

Let us, then, write finis to the myth of the bone-idle Bing, and disbelieve all you read in his autobiography on the subjects of work and luck

- the man is totally unreliable on these issues!! His artistry could not have been perfected without hard and intelligent application, any more than the magic of Mozart could have emblazoned the world without his study and mastery of musical form, or the dazzling display of Astaire's dancing have so intoxicated our senses without his initially suffering the hard graft of learning the technique of footwork.

Accepting this, however, it must be said that once the use of the tools has been mastered, it is in the handling of them that the craftsman outstrips the workman - and here we come to that unbridgeable chasm that separates the 'great' from the merely 'first-rate'; the point where the Great artists stand revealed in all their splendour. Of such is Mr. Crosby.

PHRASING:

Turning now to the second of the compound elements - Phrasing - there can be no doubt that in this field Mr. Crosby was a sensitive and brilliant innovator and with his advent the popular song swung onto a new and fruitful road; a road that has since borne many fine artists and skilled interpreters, but none as yet to equal the original road builder. And note that when I refer to Bing as an innovator I do not overlook Al Jolson, who, with his tempestuous, dynamic style must remain a law unto himself. There was only one Al Joldon just as there is only one Bing Crosby, but it might be said that whereas Al showed the world what Jolson - and only Jolson - could do with a popular song, Bing showed the world what anyone MIGHT do with a popular song, and in so doing influenced its history to a greater extent than did Jolson. Both these remarkable artists are inimitable, but whereas Jolson was generally regarded as such, Bing's personable and deceptively easy style offered a faint hope promptly seized by many imitators. The best of these, quickly realising the futility of imitation, soon adjusted their styles and made their own way to the top, but that way had been opened by Bing. The Crosby style remains unique, the variations on it innumerable, and it is in this respect that Bing exercises a continuity of influence upon the popular song whereas Al must remain as an unforgettable and irreplaceable impact upon it.

The extraordinary thing is that Mr. Crosby still remains unique in the matter of phrasing, for although on the feminine side Ella is of equal stature, no male vocalist has yet approached the consistent musicality and inventiveness of his phrasing. From the exuberant days of his early period, deeply influenced by Louis Armstrong and the early Jazz musicians, down to his current period when the sheer artistry of his phrasing covers up (it must be confessed) a loss of vocal range, he stands alone. Incredibly, at over 70 years of age (it can't be true!) he still leaves all opposition standing, simply by this unique phrasing and incomparable skill of delivery. Only a few years ago, at the age of 67, after cutting the disc "HEY JUDE/HEY BING!", he was given a standing ovation by the musicians booked for the studio accompaniment: men at the top of their profession, hardened, highly skilled and normally impassive - yet they so recognised the supreme skill of the soloist that they were impelled to the unprecedented action of spontaneous applause....a tribute indeed.

And it is with applause echoing in our ears that we pass to the third and greatest of the Crosby elements - Personality.

PERSONALITY:

This is the element lacked by all Crosby imitators - the one that Bing alone can supply and which is arguably the most distinguished of the Crosby trinity of blessings. Personality - the spark which in igniting the two other elements formed a combustible mixture which exploded in the world of popular music at a formative time....and the echoes of that explosion still reverberate throughout that sadly changed and somewhat degraded world of today.

A recent critic - Mr. Ken Barnes - sagely observed that Bing has enough personality for three men, to which might be added that one could not wish to meet three nicer fellows, for throughout his long career Bing has radiated a warmth, friendliness and genuine humility rare in any walk of life. His accomplishments are many, pre-eminently in the field of show business but spilling over into the worlds of acting, sport and business, and the visual image he presents is that of an exceedingly happy fellow - intelligent, kindly, modest, and simmering with an inbuilt mirth that lies never deeper than two whiskers below the surface. One is immediately drawn to such a portrayal and the secret

of such attraction lies in the fact that there is no artifice in this projection - it simply IS Bing Crosby, for at no time in his career has he adopted a veneer for public use. Crosby the singer, Crosby the actor and Crosby the public figure are, each and every one of them, Crosby the man, for a lifetime of unprecedented triumph has left the character of the 72 year old Bing untouched. A trifle mellower, a deal wiser, a tinge, perhaps, of the recollective sadness that most of us gather with the years, but still genial and completely unassuming, and across a gap of 50 years, looking over the towering achievements that lie in between, the young and the old Bing Crosby can still shake hands in mutual recognition. This is the measure of the man.

And it is this happy and equable personality which finds expression, I would suggest, in his art, for whereas with most singers (Jolson excepted) it is the voice that speaks through the man, with Bing Crosby the reverse applies....it is the man that speaks through the voice. This is the element that defies imitation; this personality that comes bounding out of the loudspeakers slapping us between the shoulder blades and telling us that he, too, 'ain't got a dime to his name, but it doesn't worry him for still the bluebirds sing, love is just around the corner and anyway something wonderful is always happening!

Reflect awhile and you will realise that Bing never casts a dark shadow over the mind: never leaves us with a feeling of anything other than warm comfort. He is the optimist par excellence - the original Ship of Hope (Robertless) sailing the storm wracked seas of the 20th century. Even when he laments about not standing 'the ghost of a chance', we know that he really doesn't mean it - somehow he will win through and even if he doesn't, well, there's a fresh wind blowing from the West, and a long drive down the fairway will soon straighten him out. Life is too brief and precious to waste in fretful whinings: give thanks for the sackful of good things and when faced with the bad, tighten your grip on the club shaft and try to drive over them.

This attitude of Bing's is that of the well balanced person, who, weighing life very carefully, has found it to be good and who accepts the inevitable trials and sorrows with humility, knowing them to be but the thorns which surround the rose - and who amongst us would not risk a thorn scratch to savour the fragrance of the rose? That marvellously perceptive early poem of G. K. Chesterton's, "The Unborn Child", is here calledto mind:-

"They should not hear a word from me
Of selfishness or scorn,
If only I could find the door,
If only I were born."

This is a lesson that Mr. Crosby learned early in life - the lesson in gratitude, and very few can project it with quite his infectious sincerity. He has had his fair share of sorrow along with the joy, as with all of us on the whirligig of life. The early death of his beloved wife, Dixie, was a terrible blow which took years to surmount, but he faced it with typical courage and rose from the ashes of his grief to build a new life and found a new family which has brought great comfort, joy and love both to him and to them. This was a thing that took tremendous courage - it would have been so easy to sink in the slough of despond, but fortified by his Christianity and his firm grasp of the realities of life, Bing rejected the pagan temptation of Despair and placed all he had on Hope, which must have seemed a rank outsider at the time. However, it was saddled by a good jockey and came home an easy winner, thus rewarding his courage in the finest of all possible ways, and giving us an object lesson in the power of optimism....a lesson from which we all can profit.

For consider (yes, you, dear Reader....you chewing a fretful cigar and cursing the devious byways of this article) have we not seen the gold of Summer fade into the coppery bronze of Autumn? Have we not seen the white bleakness of Winter fight a losing battle with the green legions of advancing Spring? And we that have heard Crosby and Jolson, seen Astaire, watched May drive through the covers and Gareth Edwards score a try, drunk Burgundy and laughed with friends, what have we to whine about? To have experienced these things once is a benediction, but to have them constantly before us is a miracle. Be grateful, as Bing is; express your gratitude, as he does, and fill yourself with the fun of living, as he does, and you will have a true

perspective of what life is all about. For it is this happy Personality of his that acts as a catalyst, and in fusing the voice, rhythm and phrasing, creates a finished product which is unique, lying quite beyond the realms of imitation, for in the entire history of popular music no male vocalist (Jolson again excepted) has ever so unmistakeably stamped his Personality on his songs as Bing Crosby. In fact, as Jolson shares with Bing this singular attribute, a brief comparison might be of interest.

Commanding personalities both (or rather commanding in the one and captivating in the other) each brought to his art the adornment of a unique personality: each had more to offer than merely voice and technique, and each, consequently, is inimitable. With Jolson, the total dedication, the supreme self-confidence (often mistaken for conceit) drives through every lyric. With Crosby it is the casual, unassuming, sunlit friendliness of the man that shines through the songs. Jolson's voice demands a hearing: Crosby's hints at a faint surprise that anyone is listening to a refrain he is throwing off merely for his own amusement. Again, Jolson's performances were rather like a Royal audience in that no one dared (or wanted) to leave before the King himself had closed the proceedings. Had anyone left the theatre during a Jolson performance, Al would have leapt off the stage and pleadingly followed the lone dissenter to the very street, leaving the rest of the audience momentarily forgotten: he needed every single person in that audience. With Bing, the whole audience could walk out and he might well continue warbling to the stage props. In this respect it could be said that all Jolson's were Command performances and all Bing's were Benefits.

Returning from this digression to dig a little deeper into the Crosby Personality, we find that Bing's casual approach to life deceptively masks an active and erudite mind. His intelligence is of a very high order indeed, certainly sufficient for him to have made an outstanding success of any career he chose to follow - although he would never knowingly admit to any unusual effervescence above the collar bone. Nonetheless, he is fluent in several languages and has a notable mastery of his own, bringing to his use of the spoken word something of the same smoothness of phrasing that is found in his singing, allied to a use of colloquialism that is inventive, individual and highly amusing. Indeed, it can be quite diverting to listen to some of our more 'progressive' interviewers trying to cope with the fluency and erudition of Mr. Crosby. All too often they are enmeshed in the glittering web of words that is spun around them and beat a hasty retreat in a flurry of trite questions that require only monosyllabic answers. And who can blame them? A diet of electric guitars and waist length hair is no training ground for interviewing a Great Star of the old school.

Inevitably, the question of Bing's wealth is paraded in all such interviews - impertinent?...of course. Irrelevant?...certainly, but as the greedy and envious modern mind siezes upon such things, let it be stated in cold print that the essential character of Mr. Crosby remains unaltered by monetary wealth. Having achieved it, he has naturally made use of it as would any reasonable man, and - used sensibly and without flamboyance, as one would expect of the man - it has no doubt brought him pleasure in many ways. The important thing to note, however, is that had Bing remained a moderately paid dance band singer, he would have enjoyed life in precisely the same appreciative, easy-going manner: he has not been spoiled by acquisition of the stuff any more than he would have been soured by the lack of it.

Readers of this magazine will be well aware that the true wealth of Bing lies in what he has given to the world and not in what he has incidentally acquired on the way.

Finally (and with what joy, patient readers, will you sieze upon that glittering, single word) to complete this analysis, if an impression has been given that Bing wears the collar of Father O'Malley two inches above his head, let us immediately dispel this: he is no saint, nor would he wish to be so regarded. Wisely, he distrusts inordinate adulation and has always preferred to avoid the public spotlight wherever he can do so without giving offence. As a runner in the Human Stakes he is subject to the same strains, stresses and temptations that afflict us all. In his early days his natural exuberance led to a brief period of wildness which injured no one and left no permanent mark on his character, and indeed the Bing of today still possesses that same refreshing zest for life, and is remarkably alert, enthusiastic and energetic, although

his approach to life is now (as he himself might express it) 'tempered with a modicum of sobriety'.

We know he can cuss, can be stubborn and occasionally ill-tempered (but not for long; ill-temper has ever been an uncomfortable passenger on the Crosby shoulders and is always avid to leap off) and there must surely occur in the Crosby household those days with which we are all familiar - days when early morning sees the razor slip, the shoe-lace break and the toast burn: days when the cat is booted, the Government cursed and loved ones flee to the nearest available shelter. And if Mr. Crosby should have the misfortune to stub his toe (on the moon?) why should he not scorch the surrounding air in the time-honoured manner? Was it not his fellow countryman, that wise old bird Mark Twain, who sagely observed that 'in certain circumstances profanity affords a relief denied even to that of prayer'....a sentiment with which the Almighty, looking down at the grievous mess we have made of His gifts, must surely concur.

And so, with the Winter chills creeping under the door and the last of my snowball theories having been flung at the heads of you poor, inoffensive readers, who have done nothing to deserve such wanton brutality, I thankfully lay down my ink-stained typewriter, leaving you with this final thought....

Bing frequently refers to the large part that luck has played in his career and one cannot doubt the truth of this observation provided it be clearly understood that this luck has been all on our side. We are the lucky ones in that we are contemporaries of Mr. Crosby, for consider - had he been born in the time of the Crusades or in that of Chaucer, he might have survived (if at all) merely as a passing name in a history book: a Blondin wandering his tuneful way through the Holy Land, or the teller of a salty tale along the Kentish roads. Inevitably he would have enjoyed life with the same zest and would just as freely have distributed the largesse of his personality, but to how pitifully small an audience!

Our luck is that he was born into our age - an age when radio, record and film have combined to spread his benediction through millions of homes: when, at the touch of a switch or the drop of a needle, we can lie back, dismiss the world and its worries, and let the Crosby sound carry us back to Green, Green Pastures....Luck indeed. See what I mean about gratitude?

Long may he continue to delight us by his presence on this troubled Earth, and may the snows of many White Christmases yet to come, fall gently around the shoulders of the matchless Bing Crosby, his family, and all those whom he holds in high regard (including, we dare hope, all members of the ICC).

And as for you, dear Readers - those of you, that is, who have courageously struggled through the preceding tangle of words; that small and valiant band determined to wrest some nugget of consolation - to you I offer this simple advice....when the eve of Christmas steals through your windows, forget the fever of shopping, the rattle of the cash registers, the newspaper headlines and all things political and commercial....

Listen to the Church bells tolling above the barren noise of the 20th century, and to Bing singing "Adeste Fideles" and "Silent Night", for these things will tell you the true meaning of the Christmas Feast. Act on the message they convey and your Christmas will indeed be one of peace and happiness.

And to those sensible Readers who gave up after the first page - congratulations!....your percipience has been well rewarded, and the Happiest of Christmases to you all.

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LESLIE GAYLOR writes.... As members may have gathered, Bing was heard talking over the Transatlantic telephone on October 18th, on the occasion of his 47th recording anniversary, on "Late Night Extra" (Radio-2). I had sent a postcard to Peter Latham, the programme announcer, suggesting that a recording could be played to mark the event. I received a telegram from the BBC, plus two 'phone calls at my place of employment, in connection with my suggestion. They were delighted to learn that I had met Bing on October 12th and they readily agreed to contact him with the invitation to speak on the programme. Having told the BBC of Bing's interest in the popularity of his recent 'single' in this country, I was particularly pleased to hear it played after the telephone conversation. If I say so myself, I consider this event to be a tremendous 'plug' for Bing! (See 'BING ON THE BOX' for further details of this occasion)

CHRISTMAS CROSBY SHOPPE

Absolutely the finest medium by which to BUY, SELL or EXCHANGE items of Crosbyana.

WANTED: A copy of the album "BING CROSBY" (Cobra LG LP 307). Please send details of condition and price to: Bob Roberts, 56 Thorold Road, Chatham, Kent.

WANTED: A copy of the ICC album "BING CROSBY'S ALL-STAR CHESTERFIELD SHOW" (All Star Products LP 2000). Please send details of price and condition to: Colin Smith, 32 Pinfold Lane, Norton Canes, Cannock, Staffs. WS11 3PH.

OFFERS INVITED: "SOFT LIGHTS AND SWEET MUSIC" (Pelican LP 104) in new condition and "ALL STAR FESTIVAL" (UNHCR 99500 DL) in almost new condition. Write to: Bert Bishop, "Tideway", Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 6AJ.

FOR SALE: A copy of the German Historia album "HOLLYWOOD FILM MUSIC OF THE THIRTIES" in stereo. Two tracks have audible surface damage, one of which is the Bing track. 75p plus postage. Also list of 78's on receipt of a S.A.E. (nothing rare). Write to: Bert Bishop. (Address above)

WANTED: Has any member half-a-dozen spare tape boxes to hold spools of 5¾" diameter? Either separate lid or hinge-lid will be acceptable. Write to: Leslie Gaylor, 114 Medina Avenue, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1HG.

OFFERS INVITED: Eight 10" Brunswick 78's in varying grades of condition (to be sold as one lot):

San Fernando valley/Riding down the canyon
April played the fiddle/I haven't time to be a millionaire
The singing hills/Devil may care
Poinciana/Hello mom
Going my way/Swinging on a star
We'll gather lilacs/Beautiful love
Trade winds/Can't get Indiana off my mind
Yodelin' jive/Ciribiribin

Write to the Editor, John Bassett, "Bingville", 72 Stromness Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 4JQ.

WANTED: A copy of the 'Lithograph' as used on the cover of "HEY JUDE/HEY BING!" and advertised in the States by Amos Records. Please send details of price to: Keith Hyde, "El Bingo", 21 Carbeena Parade, West Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia, 3081.

FOR SALE: Bulbs of the "Bing Crosby" tulip. They have beautiful red blooms and are suitable for either indoor or outdoor cultivation. 6 bulbs, 45p post paid, or 6p each for greater quantities, postage extra. Write to: Bert Bishop, "Tideway", Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 6AJ.

WANTED: "BING'S HOLLYWOOD", nos. 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 14. Also the albums "IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN" (LAT 8331), "HOME ON THE RANGE" (LAT 8152) and "BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN" (AH 139). Please send details of prices and conditions to: Eric Fearne, 6 Thorndyke Way, Wrotham, Near Sevenoaks, Kent.

WANTED: "TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL" (Brunswick album, LAT 8253). Please send details of price and condition to: Mr. A. Borrow, 21 Scarth Street, Lingdale, Saltburn, Yorks. TS12 3DR.

Available to ICC members only:

CLUB TIES (in navy blue) ... £1.00 each

CLUB CAR BADGES (for either grille or bar fitting) ... £2.75 each

CLUB BLAZER BADGES (with either blue or black background) ... £3.75 each

All prices include postage and packing. Please allow eight weeks for delivery. Cash with order, to: RON BAXTER, 24 ROPERGATE, PONTEFRACT, YORKS. ENGLAND. (Telephone: 2351)

WANTED: The following titles are required on 78 rpm discs by Phil Clarke, 69 Walden Road, Stamshaw, Portsmouth, Hants. PO2 8PH:-
I found you, Love you funny thing (-B), Shadows on the window, Happy-go-lucky you, Lazy day, With summer coming on, Love me tonight, We're a couple of soldiers, I'll follow you, Someday we'll meet again, It's within your power, Young and healthy, What do I care it's home, You've got me crying again, Here is my heart, My love, I've got to pass your house, Little Dutch mill, Shadows of love, Give me a heart to sing to, Silent Night/Adeste Fideles/Lift up your hearts/ Stabat Mater, Red sails in the sunlight, I have so little to give, I never realised, What will I tell me heart, Peckin', Sentimental and melancholy, When the organ played O promise me, Let's waltz for old time's sake, Alexander's ragtime band, Now it can be told, Let's tie the old forget-me-not, Neighbours in the sky, Cynthia, The girl with pigtails in her hair, Devil may care, Paradise isle, Chapel in the valley, I only want a buddy, Sweetly she sleeps, Oh how I miss you tonight, You're the moment of a lifetime, Let's all meet at my house, Angels of mercy, Nobody's darling but mine, When the white azaleas, Lily of Laguna, A boy in khaki, But not for me, September song, Night and day, Amor amor, On the Atcheson Topeka, Begin the beguine, Hot time in the town of Berlin, Moonlight on a white picket fence, It's anybody's spring, Would you, Dear friend, Just one of those things, Why do I like you, Whose dream are you, Home sweet home, Ave Maria, Save your sorrow, Baby won't you please come home, That little dream got nowhere, Give me the simple life, I've found a new baby, Sweet Lorraine J'attendrai, You sang my love song, Personality, Just my luck, You may not love me, So would I, Does your heart beat for me, The one I love, Gotta get me somebody to love, Feudin' and fightin', Pretty baby, Rosalie, The next time it happens, Moments to remember, White world of winter, Story of Sorrento, Love me or leave me, If I loved you, Lilli Marlene, Love thy neighbour, Stay well, The little grey house, When the sun goes down, The yodel blues, The big movie show, Poppa Santa Claus, Without a word of warning, I might be your once-in-a-while, The loneliness of evening, We all have a song, Moonlight bay, Getting to know you, Old soldiers never die, Tenderfoot, What a little moonlight, Down by the riverside.
Please state prices and conditions.

WANTED: Various Russ Conway LP's are required by a close friend of the EDITOR! Please send details of any Conway albums which you have for disposal, clearly indicating conditions and prices.

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ADDITIONS TO "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY"

The current crop of new album releases has resulted in countless additions and amendments to the "A TO Z" title listing. However, instead of publishing these items as a loose insert in "BING", we are considering producing a fully revised edition of the "A TO Z" at some time in the future. The recent abundance of albums from the States, featuring radio shows and 'air-shots', etc. have created many unforseen difficulties. Discographically speaking, these tracks are not strictly eligible for inclusion in the "A TO Z" and it's a problem knowing where to draw the line. For example, two 'PHILCO RADIO TIME' items are included, whereas the 1948 baseball commentary 'air-shot' has been omitted. The more one attempts to disentangle these irregularities, the tighter the net becomes! However, while the matter is being closely examined, we'll refrain from publishing further 'correction sheets' for distribution with "BING", pending a new edition of the book.

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REMEMBER THE 'COPY' DREADLINE!

Lateness of various articles arriving at "Bingville" has compelled us to 'go to press' with the magazine, thereby avoiding excessive delay. Once again, we stress that all contributions should be received by the Editor no later than three weeks prior to the month of publication. Much abliged!

IT'S THE NATURAL THING TO DO!

If you've seen that splendid photograph taken of Leslie Gaylor with Bing outside the Connaught Hotel you'll be pleased to note that Les was 'plugging' the ICC in his role of Publicity Officer....observe the club tie! Full marks to Bing's UK 'representative' on being properly dressed for the occasion! Have you bought your tie yet? (See 'CROSBY SHOPPE')

BING ON THE BOX

Radio and Television reviews
by BERT BISHOP

Because of an oversight on my part the review of a television programme starring Bing was omitted from the September issue. I hasten to rectify that negligence straight away: so here then is a paragraph or two on 'SERGEANT BILKO' - starring Phil Silvers as Sgt. Ernie Bilko with Special Guest Star, Bing Crosby, in 'Bilko Presents Bing Crosby'. This comedy programme went out on BBC 1 on Saturday, June 23rd at 11.15 p.m., and was a repeat. It was also of some vintage since it featured to considerable extent Bing's brother, Everett Crosby. As he passed away on the 13th July 1966 it will be realised that this thirty minutes of fast talking fun may well have been produced a decade ago.

The comedy plot begins with Bilko embroiled in one of his impecunious problems that constantly beset him. The attraction of a 50-1 chance gee-gee had been too much to resist, and as the nag had justified the bookmakers' lack of faith, Sgt. Bilko is obliged to set his scheming brain on a plan to replace $200 from the Platoon Welfare Fund which was the source of his gambling wherewithal.

Since nobody of any theatrical consequence had ever come near Fort Baxter in Kansas it is with considerable joy that Bilko reads in a variety column that: "With the shooting of his new picture come to an end, Bing Crosby is motoring from Hollywood to New York to TV appearances".

"That means he's gotta pass through Kansas!" he ejaculates; and with natural propensity his mind boggles at the enormous potential of that significant sentence.

Ere long, he is on the 'phone to Everett Crosby, Bing's manager, to whom he applies such convincing cajolery that a promise is made for Bing to stop over at the camp as a moral boosting personal appearance at a concert that Ernie Bilko is already cashing in on in no uncertain manner. Not only highly priced 'lap seat' tickets but all kinds of Bing orientated knick-knackery are selling and sweeling the coffers of the resourceful Sergeant. But, 'the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley', and when a Western Union telegram arrives from Bing to say that he won't be able to make the concert the master mind of machination slips swiftly into top gear in a desperate grasp at duplicity.

Help is at hand with the Western Union messenger chappie upon whose physiognomy Bilko's guardian angel has cast a passing likeness of the 'Old Groaner'. This unwilling charlatan has never heard of Bing and has to be cast in a very rough mould of the master: his only requirement being to be seen upon the recreation-hall stage. Although laying claim to some amateur theatricals his party piece starts and finishes with 'The Wreck Of The Hesperus' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which he keeps repeating. At the penultimate moment the reluctant imposter vanishes leaving Bilko with an irate audience clamouring for Bing.

Bilko stalls frantically, trying unsuccessfully to quell the chanting "we want our money back" gallery, when suddenly a roar of welcome goes up to greet Bing who has appeared at Bilko's side. The poor, bemused Sergeant attempts to hustle this 'intruder' off of the stage when all at once the penny drops. Bing has been able to make it after all and never was our artful dodger so relieved at such a turnabout of his fortune!

Bilko offers the stage and the orchestra to Bing who spurns the latter with the suggestion that, for a change, he might do something different.

"Anything you want, Bing", beams Bilko, still in a temple of delight at his coup.

Bing steps forward to the footlights, takes up a dramatic stance, and begins: "'Twas the schooner Hesperus, that sailed the wintry sea; and the skipper had taken his little daughter, to bear him company...."

It was a neat, though perhaps slightly predictably comical twist to the end of the tale in which Bing was present for disappointingly only one-and-three-quarter minutes of this verbally frenetic comedy import.

Whatever else may have been shown on television this year the 'big event' for Crosby fans and devotees of early cinema was the screening of 'KING OF JAZZ'. It was the last of a BBC 2 season of films of this genre and was transmitted at

8.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 18th September: for those with colour TV there was the added advantage of the two-colour tint in which the film was produced. All in all it was quite an ambitious production launched by Universal Pictures as their counter to the popularity of Warner Bros. Al Jolson musicals.

Several aspects of the film were more than adequately dealt with by Keith Parkinson in "BING"-31, but a post-televising view of Bing's contribution by your reviewer may not come amiss. Incidentally, I was seeing it for the first time and from what I have been told the print used was superior to that which was screened at the National Film Theatre in June 1971.

Although Bing was uncredited as an individual he was given the signal honour of singing solo over the credits. The song was "Music Hath Charms", and it was Bing's first in a full length feature film. As such, it might be worthwhile noting the lyric to this epic refrain which takes its title from a mis-quotation from William Congreve's 'The Mourning Bride', and was written by Jack Yellen and Milton Agar.

Music hath charms that nothing else has.
Music hath charms though it's classic or jazz.

A symphony grand by Schubert or Brahms;
A popular band or a uke' 'neath the palms.

A melody in minor key can make the teardrops start;
And then again a glad refrain can cheer a lonely heart.

Sweet harmony when there's someone in your arms.
Oh, baby, it's then that music hath charms.

As may be seen it is an appropriate lyric for both the film - which was a showcase for the wide-ranging versatility of the Paul Whiteman Orchestra - and for the even more versatile Mr. C. Bing sang it with much aplomb and his rendition was unmistakably pure Crosby in tone and delivery.

Charles Irwin then came on to introduce the 'Musical Scrapbook', which began with an animated cartoon sequence set in darkest Africa purporting to show how Paul Whiteman came to be crowned the 'King of Jazz'. This novel feature interpolated several songs in a medley that suited the action. During the musical arrangement there were some eight seconds of scat singing by the Rhythm Boys, following a few lines of "My Lord Delivered Daniel" sung solo by Bing, for the 'voice' of a cartoon figure of 'Pops' Whiteman being pursued by a lion at the time.

The next that is seen of Bing is a set piece Rhythm Boys 'Scrapbook' feature (shown in entirety on last Christmas's "PARKINSON" show) in which a veiled curtain is drawn back revealing the at once recognisable Rhythm Boys in silhouette, comfortably esconced in a luxuriously modern lounge - Bing in an armchair on the left of the picture, Al Rinker at centre and Harry Barris seated at a grand piano to the right. Their number was one of their repetoire hits, "So The Blackbirds And The Blackbirds Got Together", beginning with a short chorus of their greatest hit, "Mississippi Mud". It was the best section of the film for my money and showed off the boys as they were during their Whiteman singing group days - real nostalgia plucked right out of the past that makes those early days Rhythm Boys records more tangible; almost visual; whenever I play them now.

Our young 'Old Groaner' was soon to be seen and heard once more - albeit somewhat briefly and fragmentarily - in a comedy spot, with a song from Jack White, who was supposedly the property man. Whiteman was away and some of the boys were having some unrehearsed fun backstage. Although hackneyed now, many of the musical items, jokes and sketches were as fresh as paint then: it is with this knowledge that one must view these early films for much of their content is still presented with only the thinnest guise.

Following that natural setting came the spectacularly arranged theatricality of "A Bench In The Park". Some seven minutes of frothy romanticism that was a trend setter for many subsequent film musicals with 'big city' parks as lovers' trysting places. The Brox Sisters were well featured in this sequence with the Rhythm Boys contributing some scat singing whilst canoodling with their female partners. All were elegantly attired - the boys in top hat, white tie and tails. As a musical showpiece it was very good but not much in it for Bing and his confreres.

On the other hand, the Rhythm Boys had much more of the action, at least vocally, during the song and dance routine of "Happy Feet". They sang the verse and chorus of this mainly visual tap dancing tune whilst the snappy beat of the happy feet came from Al Norman, Sisters 'G' and the Russell Markert Dancers. At this point I'd like to correct an error on my part that I made in "BING"-31 where I stated that the Brox Sisters were featured on this soundtrack number as included on the LP, 'JAZUM' 15.

As must be well known by most readers, Bing missed out on the "Song Of The Dawn" singing cowboy spectacle because of his violation of the 'Prohibition Law' which, after an automobile accident, resulted in his temporary detainment at the U.S. Government's pleasure! Certainly it was a great number for John Boles who sang and acted it out as straight as a die....without blinking an eyelid! One cannot imagine Bing producing that same, stilted effect even though he had been thus directed.

Rightly, this ambitious film deserves its niche in cinematic history not only for its effective sublimity but also for the significance of the 'Bing Crosby's first feature film' appendage that now attends it.

On consecutive Sundays - 16th September and 23rd September - at 2.30 p.m., BBC Radio 2 broadcast 'THE BOB HOPE STORY'. Two complete hours of Bob against Bing's 14 must be accepted as some recognition by the BBC of each performer's relative impact upon the world of entertainment. It should also be noted that five Bing and Bob commercial duets were played and that extracts from their 'ROAD' films were featured. It was almost the Bing Crosby and Bob Hope Story!

One of the most enjoyable aspects of this two-part programme was the narration by Dorothy Lamour: her enunciation was perfect, which combined with her natural charm marked her down as exactly the right choice for this humerous and, at times, compelling insight into the career of Leslie Townes Hope.

Naturally, Bob had many gags on Bing; in fact the programme opened with Bob's comment:

> "Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen: this is Bob 'BBC' Hope. BBC! To me those letters mean only one thing - burn Bing Crosby!"

However, there was praise, too, Bob said how he admired Bing's ad-libbing ability and appreciated the way that Bing 'fed' him a straight line. 'Dottie' Lamour also had quite a bit to say on their 'ROAD' films which from her nostalgic recounting afforded her a great deal of pleasure:

> "Bob's partnership with Bing and me became a legend."

Much of Bing's contribution had already been heard in the series on his own life. Possibly there were some lines that had been originally edited from that tour-de-force and were now brought into use for this biography. All of the stories concerning them both had been heard before, and Bob's red-painted toenails at Wentworth Golf-Course came in for it again! Still, it was very pleasant to hear it all once more in reshuffled shape, and with a new and still attractive narrator.

The Bing orientated items heard were:

"Captain Custard" (from the soundtrack of 'ROAD TO SINGAPORE')
"Put it there, pal"
"Road to Hong Kong"
"Road to Morocco" (twice)
"Hoots mon"
"Team work"
Verbal extracts from 'ROAD TO SINGAPORE' and 'ROAD TO RIO'

It should be realised that I have only dealt lightly with the parts of the programme that concerned Bing, for there was a great deal of praise and comment for America's number one comedian relating to his entire life from such well-known personalities as Sir Laurence Olivier, Mary Martin, Arthur Askey, Tommy Trinder, Denis Goodwin, Melvyn Frank and Albert Knight, as well as many others. The script and research were by Charles Thompson who also handled the Bing series.

It was our Publicity Officer, Leslie Gaylor, who wrote to the BBC to point out that the 18th October was the 47th anniversary of Bing's first recording session to produce a commercial release ("I've Got The Girl"). As a result of this the BBC booked a telephone call through to Bing in San Francisco and broadcast the resulting conversation, live, between him and Peter Latham of 'Late Night Extra' in that programme which goes out on 1,500 m. on Radio 2.

After the 11 p.m. news it was announced that the call was booked and some twelve minutes later the eleven minute broadcast began. Latham commenced by noting the unique achievement of Bing's recording career and the reason for doing so. The next voices heard were those of Al Rinker and Bing recalling how they came to make their 1926 vintage duet on disc; snippets taken from 'The Life And Times Of Bing Crosby' radio series were edited for this purpose; and then most of that record was played.

Latham was then on the line direct to Bing (it was morningtime in that lofty city) who offered the opinion that the BBC were "very brave to play that record....I don't know how I had the courage to continue after such a rendition". Bing then went on to relate the events which led up to the recording and how thrilled he and Al Rinker were to have the opportunity of making it.

When asked if he had a preference for ballads over up-tempo tunes there came the inevitable reply: "I like 'em all." Bing will never be controversial in an interview - only on the most outlandish matters of the day has he ever spoken out. It certainly seems to be his natire to go along, happily, with all around him provided that it fits in his schedule and philosophical way of life.

"Are you ever going to stop singing?" asked Latham.

"I don't think so, not completely; I hope not. I'd like to keep my hand in, and if somebody's interested I'll make a record now and again 'cos I get tremendous enjoyment out of going to a recording session and working with old friends in the bands; and the old arrangers and conductors. It's a kind of holiday for me."

Bing had much to say about the benefits and amenities of San Francisco and how much he enjoyed living there: "I really think it's one of the outstanding cities in the United States."

A film on the habitat of the rapidly diminishing numbers of the Cheetah had been the reason for Bing's recent travels to Tanzania, which included stopovers in Paris and London, where, not unnaturally, he had attented some classic races. He was contacted here by the ICC as you will read about elsewhere in this magazine ('A STROKE OF LUCK' by Leslie Gaylor) although that event was not mentioned on the radio. Then he was queried on his lack of involvement in political events of even the broadest nature: Bing made it quite clear that he deliberately eschewed such activities, and with some levity intimated that he had no intention of alienating any opposing supporters! The transatlantic call was concluded with this short message:

"Very pleasant talking to you, Peter, and I want to wish all my friends over there health, happiness and prosperity."

Peter Latham then played Bing's very latest recording, "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree" - it should be noted that although it was recorded on the same day as the 'flip' side, 'Yellow Ribbon' has the higher matrix number (DL 347) and, presumably, was recorded after "It's Not Where You Start". Peter Latham could not have listened to Bing's version of 'Yellow Ribbon' previously (or properly) otherwise he would not have mistakenly cut the 'surprise' ending as he did. Musn't carp too much, though; it was good to hear Bing coming over loud and clear and keeping all these new announcers au fait with his many remarkable achievements.

Again, I am indebted to Leslie Gaylor, in this instamce for advising me by post on the morning of the 5th November that the 'battle of the baritones' would be featured in Radio 2's programme 'THE SONG STYLISTS' that very evening. This event sounded as though it might produce a few fireworks of its own as the baritones in question were non other than Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, but

Teddy Johnson, who has been introducing this programme for some weeks kept the honours about even. For those among us who can accept and appreciate each artiste's worth it made a listenable half-hour, but for any member who scorns the Sinatra style the comparison and some comments mat have been downright sacriligious!

"Two of the best known voices of the 20th century" were introduced by way of their only duet together, "Well, Did You Evah!", up until Bing's line, "You must be one the newer fellas!" to which Teddy Johnson added; "To Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra has always been one of the newer fellas, though when it comes to style and individuality Bing Crosby is no slouch himself", Johnson is pretty much a Crosby fan but I would rate that comment by him the understatement of the entire series! However, he gratifyingly went on to say that between them, Bing and Frank have influenced the world of song interpretation and vocal style more than any other dozen singers you could name. To back up that statement he noted Sinatra's 34 years of almost continuous popularity and, to some, his supreme standing in interpretation of the lyric of a song. Bing's achievements? His nigh on 50 years as a top recording artiste and record sales far in excess of any other.

The early influence of jazz on Bing was exemplified by the playing of the 1933 recording of "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" - a Dorsey Brothers accompaniment to Bing and the Mills Brothers vocalising; but it was emphasised that commercial considerations directed that Bing should concentrate on ballads of the day, such as "Goodnight Sweetheart", which was also played.

It was in 1931, when that song was recorded, that a "skinny young teenager" took his girlfriend to a nightclub and watched Bing in action: "He performed on stage with a guitarist named Eddie Lang, and I watched him; he had such great ease, and I thought if he can do it so can I". That was Frank Sinatra's first compulsive attraction to his career. But thinking, quite rightly, that the world needed only one Crosby, he developed his own style: "the Italian belle canto school of singing, without making a point of it". Two versions of the song "Night And Day" illustrated the tremendous change in style that Sinatra opted for, the first with Axel Stordahl in 1942 and the second, probably with Nelson Riddle, in 1957. It cannot be said that Bing changed his style so dramatically as the Sinatra sound. Bing has his styles to suit the material, but apart from natural voice change with the passage of time he still approaches a song in much the same way. Apropos of this mention was made of the nodules that developed on Bing's vocal chords in the early thirties, which resulted in a total lay-off with regard to singing. When he resumed, it was stated, he had a lower pitch and less than two octaves.... "and from the moment his voice did that, so did every other singer's".

Bing's song from 'ROAD TO RIO', "But Beautiful", was featured and it was suggested that Bing borrowed something from Sinatra in the phrasing that 'Frankie Boy' was using at that time; particular note was made of the type of arrangement, complete with Harry James style trumpet interpolation, that was a feature of the Sinatra recordings. However, Frank Sinatra paid a more direct compliment to Bing when he sang in his 1945 recording of "These Foolish Things" a few ad lib lines in the last chorus that included the line: "The song that Crosby sings, these foolish things remind me of you." Taken out of context it doesn't sound a compliment, but everyone must know the song and the endearing implication of the lyric.

The song writer, 'Julie' Styne, thought that because of his phrasing of the lyric of a song, Sinatra was the greatest singer of popular songs that has ever lived: a recording with Nelson Riddle of "Violets For Your Furs" was played to illustrate this point, but 'yours truly' didn't think much of the choice - Sinatra has set the seal on his style with much better recordings than this one.

The word 'style' was used to exemplify the unique talent of each artiste and brought the programme to a close by the playing of Bing's and Frank's song - in which they are joined by Dean Martin - "Style", which emphasises that theme not only in title but in the entire lyric: "If you've got it, it stands out a mile", goes the lyric. This certainly applies to the two subjects of the short programme, but I fear that 'Dino's voice is more of a caricature of Bing than natural originality.

The TV drama, 'DR. COOK'S GARDEN', which stars Bing in a straight role, has within the last quarter been shown on ITA (Southern). Obviously, many members must have seen it, including, I know, our Editor. However, until it is featired on Thames TV I shall be unable to review it within these columns.

To conclude 'BING ON THE BOX' for this quarter here is a Christmas quiz that may prove entertaining, or perhaps, like myself, cause you to tear out your hair in frustration!

On Friday, 16th November, David Dimbleby, in his programme 'THE DIMBLEBY TALK-IN', introduced the 'Members of Manser' to his audience and the viewers. His guests for the evening comprised of a group of people whose I.Q. is 130, or more, and who have formed the 'M.O.M.' society. There was general discussion on the merits of a high I.Q. and of the genetics factor involved. For added interest, there were some intelligence quotient type questions for them to answer. The final one, to close the programme with, was posed by David Dimbleby himself:

"If Caruso is to 86 as Gigli is to 54, what is Crosby?"

In point of fact, no Member of Manser got the answer and Dimbleby gave the answer to them and the viewers, and it is 39. However, he refused to say how this was arrived at, and so far I've not fathomed it. Maybe it has to do with the fact that the vowels in their names reduce: 3, 2, 1. If anybody can come up with the answer I'd be pleased to hear, and that person can consider himself eligible for a fairly select Society!

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LATE ADDITION TO 'BING ON THE BOX' (Bert Bishop)

Walt Disney has an ageless magic of appeal in practically all that he, and now his studio, did and does, and when he enlisted the services of Bing to narrate 'THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW' in a 1949 film he was on a sure winner. This Washington Irving story was one of two tales set to music and animated cartoon under the joint title of 'THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD' - the latter being 'played' by Basil Rathbone: but that was a separate story.

On Saturday, 8th September, BBC-1 presented in their 'WONDERFUL WORLD OF WALT DISNEY' series the original soundtrack version of the 'Ichabod' half of that film. It was preceded by cartoon impressions of Washington Irving's boyhood and European tour of 1802 which was to have great impact on his literary career. John Dehner was Washington's 'voice' in the lead in to the film proper.

It is worth noting that the soundtrack is quite different from the commercially recorded version of this story that Bing made - with full supporting cast - during that year for Decca. Without the visual effects, Bing had to 'fill in' for the recordings and in this respect it is superior to the film soundtrack. However, the film is a delight to see, very funny in parts, quite horrific in others - bearing in mind that this kind of family picture is primed for the younger element. Along with Rip Van Winkle, the story of the itinerent schoolmaster, Ichabod Crane, is Irving Washington's greatest contribution to American folk-lore.

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November's issue of the monthly journal 'FIELD AND STREAM' sports a splendid full-face colour photograph of Bing on its front cover ....for Bing is the subject of a six page article entitled "The Other Bing" written by Jack Samson, the editor. Over half-a-dozen colour photographs relating to the article contribute to making this issue a valuable acquisition for the Crosby enthusiast.

Hurry along to your newsagent....there is a possibility that copies of this magazine may still be in the rack!

AT YOUR REQUEST .....the MICK DRURY tape.

We are grateful to Mick Drury for supplying us with the list of song requests from which he compiled his taped programme, as heard by members who attended the ICC's 8th Annual Meeting at Leeds on October 7th. Each title is preceded by the name of the member requesting the record.

REG BRISTO	"Walking the floor over you"
RALPH HARDING	"Start the day right"
CHARLIE TUPPER	"Down by the old mill stream"
ARNOLD POPE	"My heart and I"
KEVIN LONE	"Ol' faithful" (radio item)
PETER DIFFLEY	"Mountain greenery"
FRANK ASHURST	"Forsaking all others"
IRENE ASHURST	"The very thought of you"
RON McCORMIC	"Mr. Meadowlark"
KEN HOYLE	"Just one word of consolation"
FRANK BRIGGS	"Everything is beautiful"
ALF FARROW	"The way you look tonight"
VIC GILMORE	"Auf weidersehen" (film soundtrack item)
JUDY CRAMPTON	"Livin' on lovin'"
KEN CROSSLAND	"Red River Valley"
Mrs. CRAMPTON (Snr)	"Four walls"
GEORGE SMITH	"Roundup lullaby"
TOM SMITH	"Snuggled on your shoulder"
FRANK MURPHY	"Me and the moon"
JOHN BASSETT	"I'm waiting for ships that never come in"
MARY THROP	"Among my souvenirs"
JIM THROP	"Long ago and far away"
MICHAEL CRAMPTON	"It's a lonely trail"
" "	"My love"

Those of us who have attended the annual 'get-togethers' will be familiar with the high standard of professionalism with which Mick conducts this special feature, and we would like to express our appreciation of his efforts. For a comprehensive report on this year's meeting, refer to Reg Bristo's section of the magazine.

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CELLULOID CROSBY by KEITH PARKINSON

The 'HOLLYWOOD REPORTER' stated: "One of the happiest collaborations of the season....a sheer delight, a superlative example of screen craftmanship at its best, and an entertainment that will forever be cherished in the memories of all who see it". If I give the year as 1944 then the film referred to can only be "GOING MY WAY", generally regarded as Bing's best film of the 1940's.

Although some sources only list six academy awards for "GOING MY WAY" the film gained the following seven Oscars:

Best film, Best actor (Bing), Best supporting actor (Barry Fitzgerald), Best story (Leo McCarey), Best screenplay (Frank Butler and Frank Cavett) and Best song ("Swinging on a star").

This country's contribution to the film's awards was a 'PICTURGOER' gold medal.

Musically, the film did not have a lot going for it. Apart from "Swinging on a star" the original songs for the film are unremarkable. The title song is not outstanding although "The day after forever" is a pleasant love ballad. Fortunately the film's success did not have to depend on music as much as did early Crosby vehicles. In fact, contemporary critic Forsyth Hardy remarked, "There is nothing....to remind us of the crooner or the comedian" when commenting favourably on Bing's acting performance.

The film's director, Leo McCarey, nursed the project from the time it was just an idea he had. His own studio, RKO, would not risk financing the film and even though Paramount eventually backed the film no one at the studio had

faith in the project. McCarey was fortunate enough to contribute towards financing the film and he made a substantial profit. McCarey's biographer, Jeffrey Richards, commented: "Crosby's relaxed and sincere playing, teamed with Fitzgerald's lovable old leprechaun of a priest works so well that the film remains wholly charming and enjoyable". Perhaps Steven H. Schever's assessment of the film will echo the statements made above and the sentiments of this magazine's readers: "One of the most beautiful, sentimental and delightful films ever made. Performances are perfect".

I suspect that Jeffrey Richards was being a little cynical when he wrote: "The film was such a success that McCarey promptly remade it as "The Bells Of St.Mary's" using the same storyline fleshed out with different incidents and adding a consumptive nun for good measure".

The surprising thing is that "The Bells Of St.Mary's" did not make me a fervent hater of Bing Crosby for the rest of my life, because I first saw the film at the age of six at a children's matinee. The cinema used to save the expense of booking a special children's programme for Saturday if they were playing a 'U' certificate movie during the evening but there's nothing guaranteed to irritate the under-tens more than to separate them from their threepenny pieces on the pretext of showing a Johnny Mack Brown western and then boring them with a pedestrian picture featuring two soberly attired people who look as though they cannot tell one end of a horse from the other. In later years I grasped the subleties of the plot and found it not a bad film after all. The policy of this cinema - the 'Majestic' in Bolton - had its advantages because I was introduced to the "Road" comedies at a children's matinee from which time I can trace my admiration for Bing as a film performer.

When Granada showed the film on the morning of Easter Sunday last it proved to have stood the test of time, and the scene in the early part of the film where Bing speaks solemnly to the assembled nuns who are trying to stifle laughter at the antics of a kitten that performs behind Bing's back with a straw boater is one of the funniest moments from any film that I have seen in a long time.

As was the case with "Going My Way" the film appealed to the critics as well as being a huge success with the public. "Bells" did even better than the first Father O'Malley picture and both wound up third and fourth among the most successful films yet made (beaten only by "Gone With The Wind" and "This Is The Army"). The film's title song was stronger than "Going my way". Ingrid Bergman was a bigger draw at the box office and just about everyone was going to the movies at the time the film was released. The public was seeking escapism following the end of the war and "The Bells Of St.Mary's" just could not fail.

McCarey did not find it necessary to seek the backing of Paramount after the success of his previous Father O'Malley picture and it was produced by his own company, Rainbow Productions, set up at the end of the war and one of a group of companies killed off by the rise of television and the crisis of the film industry. The film's only academy award was to Stephen Dunn for the film's achievement in sound recording.

At the close of 1945 let us briefly take stock of Bing's standing in motion pictures. He was chosen by the American Exhibitors as the number one box office draw in the "Motion Picture Herald" annual poll. (He was similarly positioned the five previous years). Paramount negotiated a new seven-year deal with brother Everett, who until this peak had kept Bing tied for only three years at a time - and he was to get considerably more per film than the $125,000 he got for "Going My Way". 'VARIETY' gave him one of the rare front page banner headlines devoted to a performer: "Bing's Bang-Up Box Office In '45", and called him "The hottest guy in show business today". And just around the corner, 1946 offered even greater success with two huge grossers in "Blue Skies" and "Road To Utopia", both of which I hope to return to one day.

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ICC members are invited to join the AMERICAN CLUB CROSBY (founded in 1937). Dues ($2.50 per year) includes subscription to "BING-GANG", the official club magazine. For further details write to Miss Pat Sullivan (President), 2829 West Wisconsin Avenue, Apt.310, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53208, USA.

BISHOP'S BENCH Sit a spell...more from the pen of 'B.B.'(of "Gunn Report" fame!)

Leslie Gaylor relates his interesting tale of rewarded perseverance elsewhere in this magazine, and apropos of this and Bing's fleeting visit to London in October, members may find the following little exchange of some interest, too.

After Leslie had 'phoned me to ask if I might locate Bing, which I was fortunate in doing, I immediately wrote to Bing at the Connaught with some brief chat on various topics, and enclosed a copy of the photo' I'd taken from the TV screen showing him digging "deep into the dim recesses of a memory atrophied by the passage of time". This was from the 'PARKINSON' show, and was published on page 24 of March "BING". The idea being that Bing might jot a line on the back for me. Before the letter arrived at the hotel Bing had flown home, but fortunately his mail must have been forwarded for about four weeks later a familiar, blue embossed envelope arrived from the States. Carefully steaming open same revealed my TV pic returned with, "Hello Bert - I really looked puzzled, didn't I? (signed) Bing Crosby", written in his own hand. There was also the following letter:-

November 2, 1973

Dear Bert:

Thanks very much for your letter. I've signed the enclosed picture and am returning it herewith. I guess that's what you wanted me to do with it.

You had a P.S. on the letter which said, "F.A.E. for the pic enclosed". I don't know what "F.A.E." means, but it must mean please sign the picture! Anyhow, I'm sending it along.

Bert, don't you ever have any concern about busting up to me and saying hello if you see that I'm in England. I am always happy to see friends and followers - people who have enjoyed the things that I've done. It's gratifying to know that my efforts have been useful.

Glad to hear there's a possibility that the Michael Parkinson Show is going to have a re-run - and also nice to know that the song, "Tie A Yellow Ribbon" is making some noise commercially.

One of the real reaons for my doing a new record was that I received a lot of mail from England from different people saying that it looked like a year was going to go by without my having a record release. And, of course, I had to remedy that!

One more thing, Bert. You're wrong about Leslie Gaylor not being aware of my presence in England. He did indeed show up, and we had a nice chat, and he brought along some pictures to be autographed and some news about records, etc. He's always full of information.

Take care of yourself -

Always your friend,

(signed) Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

P.S. Yes, I did have a couple of winners at Lingfield. In fact, a horse that I bred and sold, finished second. He's a two-year-old and should win next time out. He's called CLANRICK. I sold him to

an Englishman named Lord Carnarvon when he was a yearling.

He was about 50 to 1 and only got beat a zip, racing from a very bad post position.

PPS. Send me a copy of the picture you sent me to be autographed. I'd like to have it. It's a very interesting study. Shows me in a thoughtful mood, which is rare.

By way of explanation, 'F.A.E.' was, in fact, 'S.A.E.' (stamped addressed envelope) - I know I hit the correct key as the carbon copy confirms this! Must advise Bing on what I assumed to be an International abbreviation. There was also some slight misunderstanding concerning my remark to Bing about Leslie hoping to get along to see him at the week-end; but that is of small consequence. I'm afraid I've not followed the fortunes of CLANRICK - even with a hot tip like that (as Bob Hope would be the first to advise!) I'm most reluctant to have any pecuniary parleys with the book-making fraternity! Needless to add, Bing will be getting his picture, as requested.

At last! The meaning of the American slang expression, 'klutz' has finally been revealed to me. This word first came to my attention when Fred Astaire said of Bing, apropos Bing's 'hoofing'; "He was a klutz; he was great, in his modest way". And now we have Bing singing it on his latest 'single', "It's Not Where You Start": "....a hundred-to-one shot, they call him a klutz...."

Edward Hale thought that it sounded German and when he kindly checked an appropriate language dictionary for me he found: KLOTZ: a great lout.

This seemed a bit extreme, but promising. Later, a letter to an American (non-Bing) friend brought the reply: 'someone a bit slow on the up-take'. This fits for the song, but one can only assume that Fred Astaire's tongue was firmly in his cheek when he so categorized his 'favourite dancing partner'.

Whilst it was standard terminology and practice in the Services to call anyone with the name Crosby, 'Bing', I was nonetheless surprised to note that there is an actor who calls himself Bing Russell! He played a brief, and undemanding, role as a sheriff in a TV horror film called 'A TASTE OF EVIL', starring Barbara Stanwyck. Someone should inform Mr. Russell that 'Bing', like 'Groucho', is positively copyright!

The following item published in the 'EVENING NEWS' of September 27th, clashes somewhat with Edward Hale's letter dated 4th October from Larry Crosby on this very subject. (See page 35).

ONE FOR THE ROAD

After two years' quiet negotiations
Paramount has at last done a deal
to make a final Road film with Bob
Hope, Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour.
Bob and Bing are 69, Dorothy is 59.
No title has apparently been decided,
but it is being unkindly suggested
that it should be called 'ROAD TO
THE OLD FOLKS' HOME'.

Above this paragraph in the 'News Talk' column were photographs of Bing, Bob and 'Dottie'. It makes you wonder where the press dig up such unreliable information!

Finally, one more Christmas quiz for you. Parcheesi is an Indian board game similar to, but slightly more complex than, ludo. In which 1960-recorded song does Bing allude to this game? (Answer in the next issue). And on that 'puzzlement' I'll take my leave for 1973 and tender every good wish to all members for a very happy Christmas along with a special "Thanks" to all those who have taken time out to write or 'phone during the past year.

DO I HEAR YOU SAYING?

Cleverly disguised as Santa, our Editor slides down the chimney clutching his sack of readers' letters

JOHN FINAN (Yorks) writes: Thankyou once again for another excellent issue. One item which gave me some food for thought was the letter from Ralph Gibbons of Hants. regarding a charter flight to visit Bing. Like Ralph, it has always been my desire to meet Bing in person and the idea of a Charter flight has been in my mind for years. Unfortunately, I am a dreamer not a doer, but now that the idea has been put forward I'm all for it. Ralph can add my name to the list!

A. B. ALLAN (Newcastle upon Tyne) writes: Having just sent my renewal subscription off to Reg Bristo, I thought I'd take this opportunity of saying thankyou for the excellent magazines which I've received over the past 12 months, and to thank you also for all the hard work which you and your colleagues have put into producing them.
(EDITOR's comment: Your kind thoughts are well appreciated; and may I remind members renewing their subscriptions of the increase which came into effect as of September this year.)

KEN GRAY (Chicago, Illinois) writes: Shame on Reg Bristo! On page 43 of issue number 30 he lists "Ol' man river" as having an Arnheim accompaniment; and on page 50 of the same issue he failed to list under Joe Venuti's Orchestra, "Ida I do" and "Ain't doin' bad doin' nothin'". Perhaps the former mistake stems from a glance at the mis-print on the label of "THE YOUNG BING CROSBY" (CDS 1084). Regarding additions and amendments to "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY", please take note of the following:-
(a) Let me love you tonight (Takes A and B issued)
(b) The very thought of you (Takes A and B issued)
(c) Miss Annabelle Lee (Who's wonderful, who's marvellous?) (Title extension as shown on the label of Victor 21104-A.
Can any members help me obtain some old Australian record catalogues? I'd be happy to pay reasonable prices for same, or borrow them only for copying purposes.

ERIC FEARNE (Kent) writes: Thanks for putting my 'wants' advertisement in the last issue of "BING"....it certainly paid off and I now have eight of the LP's in the "BING'S HOLLYWOOD" series, thanks to Mr. Desmond Luxton of Surrey. This is certainly a great set of records with all the old favourites that I have been longing to own. Looking forward to receiving the LP-ography now, for this will prove invaluable to me.

HARRY AVERY (Oakland, California) writes: In your June issue (number 30) I was particularly interested in the article on page 54 entitled "Bing on Pelican Album" - especially in one statement contained in the sleeve notes which Reg Bristo so thoughtfully printed. This includes a myth which has gotten out of all proportion to the truth, and which, I believe, should be dispelled once and for all. I refer to paragraph five which starts "Surely the rarest of Bing's commercial records, the FACE THE MUSIC MEDLEY was taken off the market the same day it was issued for reasons which nobody remembers...." Since this is absolute rubbish, it's no wonder that nobody remembers! Admittedly the record is rare - but certainly not for the reason stated above, since it remained in the Brunswick catalogue over a period of at least more than four years! Documentation of this fact is reasonably simple, although I do not have all the pertinent data. But what I do have will give you some idea of the truth. Since it was recorded in early March of 1932 it seems reasonable to assume that it would have first been listed for sale in the April Brunswick supplement - certainly no later than May. My first notation of the disc appears in the December 1932 supplement where it is listed under the heading: "Records Released Since 1932 Catalog Supplement". The latter "Catalog Supplement" issued all records issued from December 1st, 1930 to February 1st, 1932 and was given away to prospective customers (few in number in 1932!) about April 1st of that year. I do not have any Brunswick catalogues covering their releases in 1933. However, in their 1934 Popular Catalog (actually issued in January of 1935) which states "This catalog lists all POPULAR selections including supplement of November 1934", the disc is still listed as available.

Here, however, it is included only under the heading of "Victor Young and the Brunswick Orchestra". As a matter of interest only, two records are listed under Crosby's name - 20105 (with the Duke) and 20109 (with Redman). All of his 10" discs are deleted since because of his move to Decca most of Bing's highly popular Brunswicks had been transferred to Melotone and other ARC cheap labels. My last reference is included in the "Complete Catalog of Brunswick Popular Records" issued December 1936 which states "This catalog lists all POPULAR Selections including supplement of October 1936". Here the record is listed under two headings - "Victor Young & the Brunswick Orchestra" and "Bing Crosby - Vocal". The other 12" Brunswicks of interest to members are also listed as still available - i.e. 20102, 20105 and 20109. In addition, the following 10" discs have been reinstored to active status - 6169, 6185, 6525, 6663 and 6936. I once (pre-World War Two) had a copy of "Face The Music" on silver label Brunswick and since this label did not appear on their records until the late spring or early summer of 1936, it's pretty obvious that the record was available for quite a spell! Just to keep the records straight, I no longer have the record but my notes show that it was from the same 'take' as the earlier gold label issue. So there you have it... Only goes to show that these 'old wives' tales' get a little out of hand at times!

EDWARD HALE (Highbury, London) writes: May I congratulate Roy Chappell for entertaining people in Bing's style. I would appreciate receiving a tape from him singing "The bells of St.Mary's" if he has the time. Also, it's a great idea he has about holding a meeting in Leyland, near Preston. Ralph Gibbons also has an exciting idea about a visit to the USA to meet Bing at his home. Boy!....I can just see the lights now....."ICC Members on the Road to Bing". Merry Christmas and warmest regards!

DICK CANE (London) writes: Please reserve a copy of "THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY" for me, together with the LP-ography. I will now wait patiently for someone to write a biography of Bing, similar to Benny Goodman's 'ON THE RECORD'.

TIM BROOKS (Jackson Heights, New York) writes: Can you recommend a good mail order record dealer in the UK who can supply me with the Corals, Ace Of Hearts and other UK and continental material, reasonably and promptly? Thank you very much for the answer to my query on dating the two versions of "White Christmas". This may have been 'duck soup' for the true enthusiast but it solved a long-standing and vexing problem for me.
(EDITOR's comment: Try writing to: His Master's Voice (Record Shops) Ltd., Mail Order Department, 363 Oxford Street, London, England. They operate an excellent mail order service in the UK, but I am uncertain whether this applies to overseas countries. However, it's worth dropping them a line.)

LESLIE GAYLOR (Isle of Wight) writes: I thoroughly enjoyed the contents of the last issue of "BING" and I would like to convey my thanks to all concerned for their efforts in producing such a good magazine. My friend Bert Bishop keeps me well informed on Bing's latest record releases, via his excellent columns in each issue. Readers may be interested to learn that Nigel Hunter has taken over the editorship of 'LISTEN EASY' and his magazine will not fall into the usual 'pop' category. It will feature articles on the all-time 'greats' of the song and dance business, and you can be certain of a goodly share of Bing material now and again, so it's worth keeping an eye on this publication.

TAPE CROSBY

by FRED REYNOLDS

69 Heathmere Avenue,
Yardley,
Birmingham, B25 8RQ.

Not to be confused with the much-acclaimed "BING" Tape Service operated by Bob Roberts and detailed elsewhere in this issue, the "TAPE CROSBY" operates as an independent feature of this magazine.

It consists of a frequently changing taped 'programme' of Crosbyana which circulates regularly amongst a limited number of ICC members.

Interested members are advised that there is a waiting list at the time of 'going to press' but when vacancies occur an announcement will be made in a future issue of this magazine.

RECENT CORRESPONDENCE ....received by our members.

In reply to LESLIE GAYLOR's letter concerning the death of Donald Peers, Bing writes:

August 28, 1973

Dear Leslie,

Thank you for your letter of August 9th. Yes, I had known of the death of Donald Peers. He was a very agreeable man, and very talented, too, and it's a sad thing that the unfortunate accident in Australia led to his early death.

We had great fun when we played the golf match at the Temple Golf Club - he and Ted Ray and Hope and I.

Hope you're flourishing -

Always yours,
(signed) Bing
Bing Crosby

In reply to EDWARD HALE's letter concerning the possibility of another "ROAD" picture, Larry Crosby writes:

October 4, 1973

Dear Mr. Hale,

Thanks for your interest, but nothing has been set to do another "road" picture.

Sincerely,
(signed) Larry
Larry Crosby

In reply to LESLIE GAYLOR's letter concerning the possible release of CBS radio material by Bing, Nancy Briggs writes:

October 5, 1973

Dear Mr. Gaylor,

In the absence of Mr. Grillo, who is on an extended trip to the Orient, I will try to advise you of the situation with regard to the CBS Radio Shows material as I understand it.

I do know that Mr. Grillo has gone into this many times as we are well aware of the potential of the material contained in these shows; however, any sale of said material involves violations of union agreements (The American Federation of Musicians and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists), as well as the rights of publishers, composers and artists, and would involve substantial royalty payments if the material could be cleared.

There is the added possibility that some of the material has been recorded by Mr. Crosby for Decca or some other recording company, in which case it would have to be cleared by this office and the recording company first.

I will bring your letter to Mr. Grillo's attention upon his return, November 5th and, if he has any further comments or feels there is any possibility for the release of this material, he will be in touch with you.

Sincerely,
(signed) Nancy Briggs
Secretary to Basil F. Grillo

In reply to EDWARD HALE's letter concerning the possibility of a repeat of the "PARKINSON" show, Richard Drewett writes:

October 8, 1973

Dear Mr. Hale,

Thank you for your letter about the Bing Crosby show with Michael Parkinson and I'm pleased to tell you there's a good chance that it will be repeated later this year. I'll try and let the ICC know a definite date but I should keep an eye on the Radio Times.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) Richard Drewett (Producer)

In reply to MICHAEL FERRUZZA's letter concerning the release of Bing's recent 'single' in the States, Dawn Kevlon writes:

October 12, 1973

Dear Mr. Ferruzza,

I'm sorry to advise you that "It's not where you start" backed with "Tie a yellow ribbon" by Bing Crosby is not yet available in the USA. Hopefully it will be released by MGM in the very near future. We have a limited distribution deal with MGM for a certain few 'Daybreak' artists and this record is included....MGM determines the release schedule for the USA and we've been unable to get this information to date.

The Bing and Basie album was released through RCA on our 'Daybreak' label more than a year ago but there were no singles available here in the USA. RCA distribution was nil - hence almost impossible to purchase "BING 'N BASIE" LP, although always available directly through us here in Hollywood.

Sincerely,
(signed) Dawn Kevlon
Secretary to Sonny Burke

Further to LESLIE GAYLOR's correspondence from Nancy Briggs, of October 5, Basil Grillo writes:

November 5, 1973

Dear Mr. Gaylor,

Just to clarify Nancy's letter to you of October 5, it is at present impossible to use any of the material involved in the CBS Radio shows which are under discussion.

Any such use would, under our recording contract, require complete repayment which simply would not be economically feasible at this point.

Sincerely yours,
(signed) Basil F. Grillo
President: Bing Crosby Enterprises

SINGALONGABING?

by KEN CROSSLAND

In these days of the 'nostalgia' boom, the current popularity of the 'Singalong' albums will not have gone unnoticed. A number of artistes are cashing in through these, particularly Max Bygraves, whose latest television series has in fact been based on this format.

Bing is, of course, no stranger to the singalong scene, and it thus seems appropriate to take a new look at the Warner Brothers albums which Bing recorded in the early 60's. I've always found these albums somewhat curious. There were four in all, assuming that "ON THE HAPPY SIDE" be included with "JOIN BING AND SINGALONG" and "101 GANG SONGS" (parts 1 and 2). Most collectors seem to look upon these records disdainfully, and it is probably for this reason that they are little mentioned in the magazine. Bing is accompanied throughout by a pre-recorded choir, which for me, is the reason for the unattractiveness of these recordings. Bing was in fine voice during these sessions, as of course he still is today, and gave us around this time such fine albums as "HOW THE WEST WAS WON", "HOLIDAY IN EUROPE", and one of my own personal favourites, "EL SENOR BING". It seems a pity therefore that he should share these singalong albums with a large chorus.

That there were four sets of singalong recordings presumably indicates that they enjoyed some success and that Bing himself was happy with the arrangement. There are also unconformed reports of a fifth singalong album, alledgedly recorded in June 1962. Not knowing the musical climate of the time, it is hard to judge the motives, if any, for these albums. It does seem to have been a passing fancy, for other artistes such as Como, Sinatra and Dean Martin were producing numerous 'orthodox' albums. The medley was a popular feature of the Perry Como show, but not in a sing-with style....more of a sing-to. I've

always felt that it was a great pity that Bing didn't get together with Nelson Riddle or Mitchell Ayres or Gordon Jenkins during the early '60s. In view of Bing's mammoth commercial output, this is just being greedy and I freely admit this. Let no-one say that Bing hasn't given us a fair share of records!

Perhaps it is thoughts like these which makes the singalong albums appear so much of a waste. The songs also are somewhat unattractive, although many could have been done beautifully by Bing alone. Songs such as "Long, long ago" and "Singin' in the rain" immediately spring to mind. Equally, however, it is hard to imagine some of the other selections being done without a chorus. Take "Old Macdonald had a farm" and "Mairzy doats" for example. One would have thought that slightly more modern songs could have been chosen. Many of the titles used go back to the early years of the century.

The new singalong albums of the 70's usually feature the star backed by a honky-tonk type of accompaniment. As yet, the Americans don't seem to have caught on in the same way as Bygraves, and Des O'Connor, although the latest Dean Martin album features older songs such as "Smile" and also a few Jolson numbers. Nevertheless, it wouldn't be too surprising to find a bright recording executive re-issuing some of the Bing albums in budget-priced form. Perhaps Bing may even consider a new album. His new single is a very attractive record, and Bing's voice is still tremendous. Songs such as "Tie a yellow ribbon" can easily be arranged in singalong style, and moreover, this type of arrangement contains few rangy pieces. Let's just hope that if this comes about, Bing leaves the chorus at home!

(Full details of the albums mentioned in Ken's article can be found in "THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY"....send for a copy now!)

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BING SINGS ....latest report on this Radio Tyneside series.

A weekly 15-minute spot on local hospital radio featuring Bing Crosby has attracted the attention of the Old Groaner himself. The maestro has written to Frank Murphy, the show's presenter, sending his personal wishes for the success of the programme. Frank's series of programmes are broadcast over Radio Tyneside, the hospital network, on Saturday afternoons at 2 p.m. Bing writes as follows:-

September 6, 1973

Dear Frank,

Thanks for your letter. Pleased indeed to hear of the activity you're engendering over there on Radio Tyneside. I'm sure that it will do a lot of good work in my behalf - and I do want to wish the program great success whenever it appears.

All best wishes to you and your staff. As ever -

Your friend,
(signed)Bing
Bing Crosby

Frank Murphy writes: From personal experience I know that this is typical of Bing. Nothing concerning his fans is too small for him to bother with. He is specially interested in hospital work and often does work for the Los Angeles hospital station.

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THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY

To be made available in the new year, this special ICC publication lists every commercially issued title by Bing, together with all known unissued and rejected titles, in strict order of day, month and year. An invaluable companion to the much-acclaimed "A TO Z OF BING CROSBY" published earlier this year. Reservations are now being taken by the Editor.

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KNOW YOUR LYRICS! ...the answers...

"Sweetheart of Sigma Chi", "From the top of your head" and "Go fly a kite"

CROSBYOGRAPHY — DISCOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH — conducted by the EDITOR

"Soft Lights And Sweet Music": ALTERNATE 'TAKE' NOTES

Yes, it's true! An alternate 'take' exists of the rarest of Bing's commercial recordings; "Soft Lights And Sweet Music" (from 'FACE THE MUSIC MEDLEY'). Recorded on the 8th March 1932 (matrix 11416) this item was released in America on 12" Brunswick 20106. Many theories have been submitted, but for some mysterious reason less than 50 copies are reputed to exist in collections throughout the world. Each and every one of those discs shows Take -B in the wax, and no evidence has ever been found to suggest that another 'take' might still be in existance, either in a private collection or in Columbia's vaults....no evidence, that is, until now!

A glance at the cover of the new BIOGRAPH album ("BING CROSBY - RARE EARLY RECORDINGS" BLP-C 13) reveals what appears to be a printer's 'gremlin', for 'FACE THE MUSIC MEDLEY' is shown as Take -C. This is certainly no typographical error, however, for careful comparison with other pressings of this track reveals at least three minor differences in Bing's vocalising. These consist of the following:-

FIRST CHORUS
(Compare the linking of the underlined words)

"Chopin and pale moonlight reveal all your charms" (-B)
"Chopin and pale moonlight reveal all your charms" (-C)

Take -B: A distinct pause occurs after the word "reveal".
Take -C: This pause follows the word "all".

SECOND CHORUS
(Compare the notes on which the underlined words are sung)

"So give me velvet lights and sweet music, and you in my arms" (-B)/(-C)

Take -B: The word "and" is sung on a lower note to "sweet".
Take -C: Both words are sung on the same note.

Take -B: The words "in my arms" are sung on two different notes.
Take -C: All three words are sung on the same note.

According to BIOGRAPH's sleeve notes, the 78 rpm records used for the transfers were from collections owned by Paul Burgess, Maurice Pope, Billie Thomas and Chester Collins, and test pressings were supplied by CBS. Are we to assume, therefore, that Take -C is a 'test' or a hitherto uncatalogued commercial release? In either event, BIOGRAPH deserve to be congratulated upon such a unique 'first' and the mind boggles at the content of future albums if this is representative of things to come!

As mentioned earlier on page 4 of this issue, "BING CROSBY - RARE EARLY RECORDINGS" is available from Dave Carey....we didn't give you the price, however - it's £2.45 plus postage.

A FEW AMENDMENTS TO "KEEPING TRACK" (Bert Bishop)

Dave Carey (of "The Swing Shop") has received notification from 'TOTEM' that their third album (LP 1004) has been deleted from the catalogues! This disc comprises of the LUX RADIO THEATRE's presentation of "She Loves Me Not", with Bing, Joan Blondell and others. No other information available.

We can now confirm that the US album entitled "THE GOLDEN AGE OF OPERA" contains an extract from Bing's 'PHILCO RADIO TIME' of 13th November, 1946 - although the label mistakenly gives the year as 1948, without mentioning the 'PHILCO' programme. The label also states: 'Private record - not for sale', and the disc is a vinyl pressing.

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* THE REMAINDER OF THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN COMPILED AND TYPED BY OUR SECRETARY *
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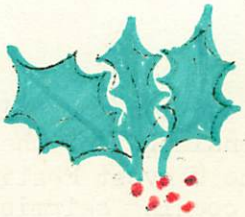
SAYS



BRR!.....or should it be GRRRRH! ?

.....depends, I suppose, on whether or not you love to gaze out of the window and see the glistening white world of winter, or whether you curse trudging about in your "Wellies", swearing as the snow finally percolates thro' to your neck....and your white world misery is complete.

Lots of compensation for Winter, I am assured by those who momentarily - note the momentarily - contemplate the aforementioned white world, and then hastily draw the curtains, blotting it all out, turning or returning to the cosy armchair, watching the firelight dancing on the pulled curtains, the cosy walls. Nothing stirs outside; the twilight has that peculiar "Christmas Day" air of everything having stopped - except the eating and drinking. The roads are silent; cars for once have ceased charging up and down going - where? A stray traveller for sure....and one wonders: "Where are they going on Christmas Day...hurrying to a party...to the once-a-year visit to mother...relations....?" Just an idle thought for it seems everyone should be indoors on Christmas Day....the peculiar tranquility of Christmas Day soon returns under the leaden sky....

But IS it a glistening white world of winter? Blessed if I know, writing this as late as I dare but still much too early to imagine whether or not we will have that rarity, a White Christmas

"Ah, bound to be a hard winter," say the knowing ones, "look at the berries on the bushes and hedgerows!"

"Not at all," retort the equally sagacious, "a good crop of berries merely indicates what a grand summer we had!"

So, we can only wait and see....but whatever the weather, it's Christmas time again. Seems impossible, as so many correspondents have unbelievingly written to me - and I must agree. Seems quite impossible that it was a year ago that with a back that appeared to be apt to break in twain I was struggling to get the promised Christmas issue to you before the magical time - which reminds me: if my car refuses to start one cold, dismal, mothming - I'm gonna walk away and leave it! But is is rather alarming how quickly Yuletide comes around these days, isn't it? Impossible to imagine one's childhood when those last few weeks to hanging-up-stocking time seemed a true eternity and one oft dismally reflected it would NEVER COME! And now - one feels the urge to stave it off! Or is that too Scrooge-like.....mebbe.

Well, granted it is indeed Christmas-time again, what's different about it? I doubt if there are any sides of beef in evidence, for a start! Sides of beef! Gee whiz, you need a second-mortgage on a second-mortgage to get a modest joint - with no hope of any being left over for "cold" supper.....and what's that wall looking so bare for? Hmmmm...seems everyone meant it when they said "No cards THIS year, for sure, Christmas or no Christmas....what with the cost of stamps, not to mention cards themselves AND the unreliability of the mail, no-sir...no cards!"

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Mind you, there's one thing that was NOT missing this Christmas! The valiant onslaught of the shops, the big departmental stores. In some places the Harvest Festival services of the Autumn won by only a short head from the opening skirmishes for the Christmas fortune-gathering. I know I was taken aback when I came across such a store decked-out - in mid-October! Truly their audacity grows year by year - though I'm certain I detected a certain sheepishness among the shop-assistants and this must have been in sharp contrast to the attitude of those higher in the scale who had made the decision that Christmas must be prepared for almost ten weeks in advance.....

What else is there of a festive nature? Oh yes, as I write it looks as if Christmas candles will play a more than decorative part this year! The miners are growling as I write, the Sheiks are hugging their oil to their respective bosoms, the electricians are blacking us out, and the gas situation is extremely shaky - almost as Sheiky as the oil supplies. Indeed, the candle makers will almost certainly come to their Eldorado this year, especially those who offer "the ideal Christmas present - a do-it-yourself candle-making kit!"

Dear reader, this is not meddling in politics - merely a recital of authentic facts as John and I busily set to for the Christmas issue. A white Christmas would seem to be an intolerable burden, even to the most romantic, sentimental, and poetic among us.....

But do not be downcast - there's one thing that is changeless. Its Crosby time again; well, super-Crosby time if you like, seeing that the peerless voice accompanies us all through the year. Yet Christmas has become a very special Crosby time - not only for the true enthusiasts who are reading this, but for mankind in general, it would seem. There is something peculiarly universal (for want of a better word) about Bing at this time of the year - a special warmth, a special "coming-home", a special radiation of goodwill to all men, a special "deck the walls" quality, a special FAMILY impression - a family-circle atmosphere. One can only be thankful that all those long, long years ago the omniscient Jack Kapp brooked no arguments from Mr. C. about "not having the stature to sing 'Silent Night', or "O Come All Ye Faithful..." and all those other age-old songs and carols of Yuletide. Long before, even, a certain Irving Berlin wrote a little ol' number called - what was it? - oh yes, "White Christmas".....

True, there is not a gramophone, record-player, tape-recorder &c. that will run on candle-power - at least, not yet so we have the somewhat bleak prospect that a power "black-out" could silence the universal voice, but let's look on the bright side and hope that the cuts, if any, come in short bursts and are not prolonged. I mean, the vintage wind-up mechanical gramophones cost a fortune today, the same as everything else, WHEN YOU CAN FIND 'EM....and in any case, I don't want to go back to playing my Bing with steel needles again!

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I WAS NOT BEING DELIBERATELY CAPRICIOUS WHEN, IN THE LAST ISSUE, AFTER PROMISING TO TELL YOU WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE PICTURE I FAILED TO DO SO! I JUST FORGOT TO! It was the picture of Bing being greeted at Dublin Airport in 1968. Bing is shewn shaking hands with his LEFT HAND! This is not an auld American-Irish custom. Somehow the picture got printed in "reverse"; apart from the wrong-hand-shaking, the words "Aer Lingus" at the back, left-centre of the picture, are back to front. My apologies to those many readers who wrote in about this. It was NOT deliberate.... but, now you KNOW.

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And on p.55 of the last issue, some readers were flummoxed at my reference to Alma being mad about the person who threw the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder...these were clearly "newer fellas"....Alma is, of course, the wife of our former Secretary, Frank Murphy.

LEEDS AGAIN!

As indicated in the last issue of BING, the annual meeting/party/gathering (this caused no little amusement!) duly took place on Sunday, 7th October last at the Wellington Hill Residents Hall, Ringwood Drive, Leeds.

This was an entirely new venue for the get-together, and for the excellent facilities provided we are indebted to Jim and Mary Throp, good friends of Mike Crampton. The hall was nicely-appointed and fully met our requirements and more. We certainly hope to go there again next year - with a crowd of a couple of hundred perhaps instead of the 35 or so we actually had this year. Not that that is any mean figure considering the distances to be travelled.

Perhaps a word of explanation is needed here, particularly for the benefit of newer members. Michael Crampton some eight or so years ago had the idea of organising an annual meeting for Crosby enthusiasts; despite many difficulties he persevered with his enterprise to the extent that the event has now become an eagerly-looked forward to fixture.

Originally Mike held the parties at his home - or rather, his mothers. One week-end a year the house was turned thoroughly upside down to accommodate more than 30 visitors! People than, as now, made their way to Mike's place from London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Epsom, Wigan, Hull, Harrogate, South Wales... from seemingly all parts of the country.

But since last year's party, Michael has gone and got himself married and he felt his new home would not accommodate such a party, and he could not go on inflicting this upside-down-turning on his mother. It was then that Mary and Jim stepped in; they are keen members of the residents' association in Seacroft. And the idea turned out to be made-to-measure for our purposes.

As always, the very excellent catering was provided and served by Mrs. Crampton, Senior, Mrs. Crampton Junior (Mike's wife, Judy that is), Mary Throp and other ladies assisted on the day. And what a job they did! In passing, it was observed that the hall boasted an excellent bar - which as, alas, not available to us. Jim Throp explained that it could be with the proper notice &c. and it seems to me this would be an excellent innovation next year.

There would, of course, be no intention to turn our very genial annual parties into a drunken orgy but liquid refreshments would prove, I feel certain, a pleasant facility and would assuredly give the overworked teapots a rest! Not to mention the ladies manning 'em! I write as a very moderate drinker; indeed, if the brewery combines relied on many like me they would not be in the haste they appear to be to turn the brewing industry into a monopoly - and would not be announcing their constantly soaring profits!

The proceedings, as always, opened with an introduction by the "host", Michael Crampton who, incidentally, has been a member of the ICC or its predecessor, since he was 14 - and that was about 16 years ago. Mike introduced, also, taped messages from Scotland (Ninian Faichney), N. Ireland (Barry Adams), and Australia (Keith Hyde). Michael then gave way, gracefully, to yours truly, Reg Bristo, for the Secretary's "state of the nation" address. This, I venture to suggest, turned out slightly hilaries and a good time was had by all! It was, however, my very real pleasure to introduce and comment on several of the members present.

> I must confess I always get a kick, a warmth, when I rise to address the meeting and realise anew as I look around that everyone present in that hall is not only my friend, but is there to be my friend solely on account of the bonds forged by Crosbyana. Its a great moment for yours truly.

And this year there was added pleasure in that several members were there in Leeds for the first time. As already indicated earlier, Pauline Newling was there, and Peter Diffley, our erudite new member from Stockport; and in contrast - friendly contrast to these new guests - we had some of the towering figures of Crosbyana present. Fred Reynolds, for example, whom I was proud to announce and introduce as probably the most prolific and diligent researcher on Crosbyana in the world. This is no extravant pleasantry: Fred's tremendous work spread over so many years on THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY discography, still the most and perhaps the only really comprehensive record-listing in existence, and the more recently published ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD, the book on all of Bing's films make this claim a very valid one indeed.

There was his collaborator and publisher of these projects, the ebullient Ralph Harding, also well-known for his lively publication, THE CROSBY COLLECTOR. Fred Reynolds was able to produce the most topical piece of Crosbyana of the day - a cassette recording from Bing himself commenting upon, and rightly appreciating, the film book mentioned above. Not the least interesting things about this tape was that Bing "adopted" his son's cassette recorder and went down town to get an empty cassette! Just imagine that!

Our former secretary, Frank Murphy, travelled down from Northumberland with Jim Moore both looking well and both as welcome as ever. Arnold Pope and his wife, Frank Ashurst and Rene, together with family, genial Charlie Tupper from Epsom, Ken Hoyle, the unflappable member from Harrogate. The Three Rhythm Boys came across from fairly nearby Hull - Frank Briggs, Alf Farrow and Vic Gilmore, that is! the two former with their wives.

Two Leeds members, naturally, came along - Ken Crossland who lives albeit in Sheffield for the time being while he takes journalism at the University there, and Kevin Lone whose sister, Mary McNamara we were disappointed not to see this year.

Our very good friends from Keighley were there to make up a very happy part indeed - George Smith, Jack Feather and Tom Smith.

It is well known that a big feature of these Leeds meetings is the highly interesting and entertaining "request tape" prepared by Mick Drury from the records selected in advance by those intending to be present. One couldn't help wondering if the slight loss of intimacy occasioned by the switch from Michael's lounge to a much larger room - small hall - might make Mick's job that much harder in getting across. But the fear was groundless for with excellent speakers and accoustics the feature proved as popular as ever. It has also provided us with an interesting feature....as you will now read:

ANALYSING THE "REQUEST TAPES" --- --- --- ---- by ARNOLD POPE.

As perhaps has just been explained, one of the highlights of the annual meeting is a tape of "requests" - favourite Crosby records requested to be played by the intending guests. The whole thing is put together quite admirably by Mick Drury, a friend of Mike Crampton's who also lives in Leeds, and a really fine job he does on it, with a linking commentary which is witty, pertinent and quite professional-sounding. Before going any further I would like to pay tribute to Mick for the effort he puts into making this tape. I for one and I'm sure all the rest present do appreciate it. Its no mean feat to hold the attention of a large party of people often anxious to discuss the last record played. Yet year after year Mick succeeds - and we're grateful, and I know the unanimous recpption Mick gets is a sincere "Thank You!"

This year there were 25 requests - and as the first one began playing I thought it might be interesting to jot down the year of recording of each track, just to see what sort of figures came up, or what significance if any could be read into them. Of the 25 tracks the years came out as follows:

1920's: Nil. 1930's: 13. 1940's: 5. 1950's: 3. 1960's: 2.

1970's: 2.

In the "silly statistics" department, if you add the numbers of years together and divide by 25 to get the "average year", so to speak, it works out approximately 1947 - but I hasten to add this means precisely nothing in itself!!

I happened to be sitting next to our good friend Reg when I mentioned to him what I was doing - in fact, I borrowed his pen to do the jotting - and he immediately said 'write something about it for BING and send it to me'. Well, having borrowed his pen I just had to agree.

Analysis of the most rudimentary kind shows over half of the tracks were from the 'Thirties when Bing's voice was, in my opinion, as its best, its peak. A further breakdown of the dates shows that, of the five tracks from the 40's, two were from 1940 itself, one from 1941 and one from 1942 so that these were very close to the 1930's era, making 17 out of 25 - grouping these early-40's tracks with the 30's era, which is not unduly stretching it, I feel. It may be of interest to add that the two 70's items were from the Basie album.

I must preface any further comments by saying that I realise that many wyo know me will, on reading them, say "Oh well, he's a Thirties' man anyway" - a remark which I freely admit to be largely true - largely, but not wholly. Be that as it may, I suggest that during the 1930's it was the simplemagic of Bing singing at his best, in a voice which had reached maturity whilst retaining its range, with a lovely tonal quality throughout the range, which made it a truly memorable decade. Bing had a tremendous "feel" for aong with a sincere and utterly sympathetic handling of lyrics which must have inspired an oft-repeated quote of that time - about the late 30's - "Bing sings every song as though it were the best he had ever heard." And you know, I think that was true. But, could we truthfully say that that applied later on in his career? In subsequent years he appeared at times to have become a little blase and even uninterested and this, I submit, tended to "come through" in his recording performances. I hasten to add that the unremitting demands made on him by Decca, and this of course prompted by public demand, must have been a heavy contributing factor. Furthermore, let's not forget that he had some really great songs in the 30's to perform, with the finest songwriters eager for him to sing their songs. The orchestral arrangements were, by later standards perhaps, a little thin and plain at times, but after all it was the VOICE we wanted to hear. And that's assuredly what we did hear.

> It is not true at all to say, nor do I wish to imply, that anything after the early 1940's was inferior. Throughout the whole of his career in recording - and I've stated this many times before - Bing has made some great records - and some not so good ones. Yes, even in the 'Thirties. But generally speaking I must maintain that the 30's were his halcyon period.

In 1956, Bing stated in a letter to British bandleader, Cyril Stapleton, and subsequently published in the Daily Express, that his record sales had "dwindled to a mere whisper". He added, at that time, that he didn't believe that it was his voice that was the cause, for he felt that it was the "overall sound" of a disc which made it successful - it should be remembered that it was around this time that a revolution in pop music was being born, the repercussions of which have become more thunderous - and not only in decibels - up to the present day. This revolution, I seem to remember, was spearheaded by one Elvis Presley.

Now, I agree with Bing on this assessment of his--"overall sound" of a disc. As we all know many great records, successful records, million-selling records have been made by artists with poor, or in some cases, virtually no singing voice at all, BUT the "overall sound", or the mood perhaps, is what the public have gone for.

What I do suggest, most emphatically, is that this point didn't apply in Bing's own particular case because, and, ironically if you like, of the tremendous standard of singing he had set for himself earlier. I think the public as a whole became a little disappointed in Bing - disappointed that his range largely went, and resulting in his declining popularity as the major power in the recording world. We must, of course, remember that even by this time, Bing was 55 years old and also other considerations - new generations coming up, changing tastes, the "permissive age", the advent of rock 'n' roll, the acceptance of the "fleeting hit record" which nevertheless hit the jackpot - all these factors have to be part of the mosaic.

Like all Crosby addicts, I was very happy when Bing did have the million-selling "True Love" about, or just after the time of which I have been writing. But here again, other factors need to be borne in mind when evaluating this success. It was from a movie that was a sure-fire hit. How could it miss with Bing and the rest of that cast? The staggeringly popular Grace Kelly, who is of course heard duetting with Bing in this number; Sinatra then beginning his approach to the summit of his career; and EVERYBODY'S favourite jazz-man, dear old Louis Armstrong. Also another thing to be considered at this time, a new worldwide affluence was becoming apparent, resulting in a bigger record-buying public than ever before. This last fact, by the way, makes Bing's earlier sales in harder economic times and wartime shortages, an even more tremendous achievement in retrospect. Remember, Bing actually began his career in one of the world's greatest financial depressions!

So, there it is - some of my thoughts put down at random as I promised Reg I would. Maybe 17 out of 25 requests coming from my favourite period and chosen by a fair cross-section of Bing folk, goes a little way to supporting those thoughts. What of you, dear reader? Do you agree with me - or do you want to tear me apart? Whatever your reaction, its all part of that infinitely pleasurable pastime - CROSBYANA. Perhaps, as a final thought, this subject could be discussed as a form of "Talk-In" at the next Leeds meeting!

ARNOLD POPE:

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CORALS PLUS CAROLS!

THIS CHRISTMAS !

I'm sure the record-reviewing has been well taken care of in earlier pages of this issue but I must put in my two-cents' worth about the latest Coral. What a jewel, what a gift! Geoff. Milne can be in no doubt as to what we all feel about the colossal work he has succeeded in pushing through at Decca resulting in this cascade of Coral albums. One of the biggest bonanzas ever to come the way of Crosby collectors. And all at an absurd price. All thro' Mr. Milne has consistently achieved what so many of us have yearned for - the availability on micro-groove in "clean" condition of 78s which were magnificent Crosby yet, perhaps because the songs didn't come from films, didn't hit the "hit-parade", perhaps because they were sandwiched in between bigger hits because of Bing's tremendous record output, have never received the prominence they certainly deserved. Whatever the reason, this Coral reissue so aptly named DAYDREAMING must be one of the finest facets of Crosbyana to yet become available.

The well-established, mature, balladeer, singing each song as if, as Arnold Pope has recalled elsewhere, it was the best song Bing had heard and deserved his fullest effort. Brilliant, yet at the same time, curiously unassuming performances. Daydreaming indeed. Fourteen faultless performances fashioned fairly from all that was finestin popular music - that IS finest in popular music. It may be asking the impossible but try, if you can, to pay the major attention on times to what the orchestra is doing on these tracks. Make it a separate exercise; you will be well-rewarded. I haven't checked on the accompanists but its a fairly safe bet that the major portion come from the ubiquitous John Scott Trotter - though I'm well aware that Victor Young is present for he provided a truly memorable accompaniment to one of my favour Crosby records of all time: "Maybe". Does that surprise you? Perhaps it won't when you have listened anew to this lovely, wistful, song from the Gershwins. It must be one of their least-known songs; at least, I never hear it elsewhere and it is one of their songs that has not become something of a standard.

And Victor Young's orchestra fully complements Bing in a beautiful performance; the surge of the strings in the middle chorus is particularly fine. But listen to what the orchestra is doing all through these melodious tracks - beautiful arrangements, superbly played and full of beautifully-thought-out orchestral ideas. The sort of arrangements that show that the gulf between popular and classical music need not be so great.

I know, too, that very, very many people will be particularly delighted that the lovely title-song - and a very apt title too - has become available in such faultless fashion. I remember some years ago now that my good friends, Walter and Gwen Lambert of Greenford Middlesex, told me of what this song meant to them and how disappointed they were at not being able to replace a broken copy. It so happened that an extra copy came my way and I was very happy to pass it on to them. I still remember their delight.... and now it is again immaculately available in company with thirteen other tracks that must, surely, delight everyone. Even those who like a "change of pace" must value this album though there is, conspicuously, NO change of pace. It just wouldn't do on "DAYDREAMING"! Whether this was Geoff's sole choice (and I'm inclined to think it is) or whether he has been advised or guided, he has produced a memorable and a magnificent album. For me, another pile of hitherto valued albeit bloomed and slightly scratchy 78s can be consigned to limbo for their contents are conveniently available now....a small technical observation and not a criticism: I find the bass slightly "underdone" on most of these tracks. I can, of course, adjust this by using more bass than I do normally. Apart from this I find the 78s beautifully transcribed and nothing missing. My warmest thanks and further congratulations to Geoff. Milne and his technical associates. The way things are going, ALL the 78s may well end up in limbo, except those retained for sentimental reasons.

It is quite a coincidence that, as Arnold Pope has pointed out, the recordings on the Coral DAYDREAMING album all fall between 1939-41 the dates on average of the Leeds request items. And one pinpointed by Arnold - I hope he will let us have his opinion of the album for the next issue.

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The purpose of BING is to keep in touch with Bing: as far as I'm concerned, few others matter. But I have permitted myself a few sardonic swipes at one F. Sinatra from time to time. This may have irked some readers - I just don't know. But it HAS irked me somewhat over the years at the various epithets that have been self-bestowed on this singer - notably that of "The Guv'nor" and "The Voice". And I freely predicted that the only certain thing to eventuate from Mr. Sinatra's much-publicised "retirement" was his comeback - quite inevitable. And so it's come to pass: and so far, hasn't caused much of a stir. The truth is that for me Mr. S. is a complete blind-spot: I just do not understand the adulation that has been heaped upon him. And that is a fact. Acting? Well, yes, he's played some good roles....but his voice to me has had nothing. Flat, uninteresting, uninspiring....phrasing freely copied from an illustrious predecessor AND contemporary. Note that combination! But, do you know, I was beginning to think I was the only one missing this magic - and it worried me. I mean, if I listed my 25 favourite singers, I doubt if Sinatra would be on it! So you can imagine my relief when I read the following letter in the Daily Mail of 28th Nov. last:

> FLAT SINATRA.
>
> I sighed with relief when I heard that Frank Sinatra had retired, only to find he's back with us once again! All I ever needed on a cold, wet, Monday morning was to hear his flat, drawling voice to give me the "blues".
>
> What a contrast to the rich, dark, sincere voice of the late Jim Reeves.
>
> (Mrs.) Lillian Standing,
> Billericay, Essex.

Bless you, Lillian! I go along entirely with the first paragraph - except that I felt the same on a SUNNY Saturday morning.....Jim Reeves? Well, I can enjoy two or three songs by Jim but then find it tends to get montonous. But I would certainly prefer to listen to one Reeves record than a 1000 Sinatra ones. Pity Lillian didn't offer the contrast of Bing - but she got the main point over, in my opinion.

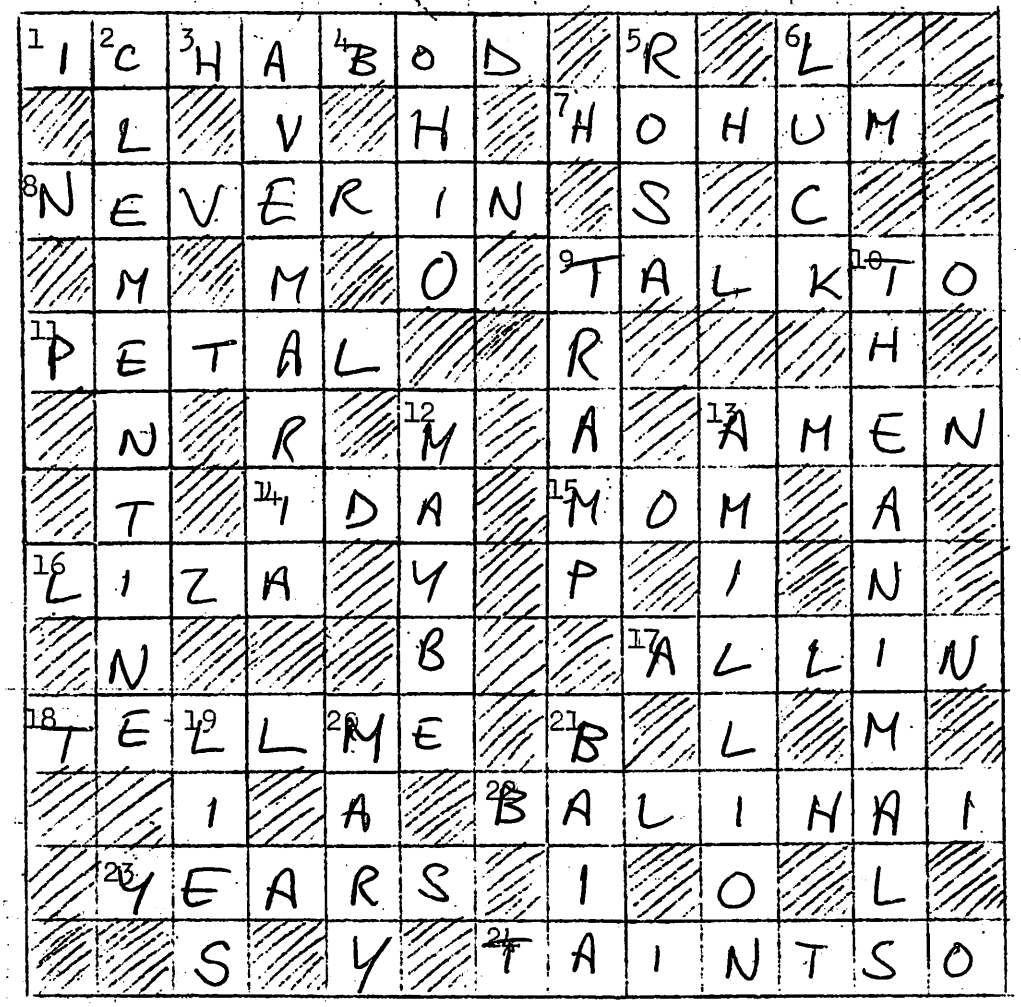
And still on the subject of this "comeback", a correspondent reports that John Dunne, hitherto one of the more bearable BBC DJs was running a one-man-promotional effort on his programme with the Sinatra come-back album...every day. Publicising it to the extent of thousands of pounds of advertising time, in fact, on Auntie BBC. One day, it seems, he had the famous lyricist, Johnny Mercer on for an interview in the course of which it was recalled that Sinatra once declared he "would sing the 'ass' off Crosby!" (Excuse me, ladies! I quote the BBC). This caused much mirth between Dunne and Mercer, and when it died down Mercer was heard to say "AND HE DID!"

Well, I've had a respect for Mercer's views in the past, I've liked some of his lyrics, and I certainly enjoyed his "labourers" part in "Mr. Gallagher & Mr. Shean" with Bing - still one of my favourite Crosby records. But after that utterance, he's off the list, excommunicated - a dead loss undeserving of further respect. Sinatra, well, I can forgive his youthful braggadocio - possibly it was just tongue-in-the-cheek flamboyance...but Mercer! Stand in the corner - and never leave it!

Which fihally reminds me that in the tape that Fred Reynolds had from Bing on the occasion of his (Bing's) receipt of Fred's mammoth film book, Bing remarked, apropos Sinatra, that he "was a wonderful friend, but an implacable enemy." I must apologise to any Sinatra fans who read this: and all I would say is "Don't, I beg of you, try and re-educate me, or convert me!" I've been trying hard for about 30 years to get this in perspective. But I always end up in the same baffled bewildered state.Honest!

PSST! I DO like Perry Como! In fact, he could easily be second...and he is singing some mighty fine songs these days, too.

A CROSSWORD (OR CROSBYWORD) PUZZLE !
(Set by reader L. Pairpoint).



ACROSS:

1. Ladies Man from SleepyHollow (7)
7. Only sounds a yo... with Loyce! (2,3)
8,13,23 An Eternity Away-even in 1937 (5,2,1,7,5)
9,10. St.Francis and Dr.Dolittle did it before Bing (4,2,3,7,)
11. "..like ---- 's falling apart" (San Antonio Rose) (5)
13. End of many a beloved hymn. (4)
14. In Brief, I had a girl (3)
15. Say Hello - She's the only one you've got! (3)
16. Girl - rare style. (4)
17. Sounds exhausted-before the game, strangely enough (3,2)
18. Bob Scobey assisted Bing in this plea (4,2,)
22. Calls from South Pacific (4,3,)
23. See 8 Across.
24. Bad Grammar, Honey, Bad Grammar (5,2,)

DOWN:

2. Only a miner's daughter, but very fruity (10)
3. Father O'Malley sings Franz Schubert (3,5)
4. Stately Song (4)
5. Rose's Santa (4)
6. "Just my....." (with Jay Blackton) (4)
9. Three of these hoboes for a marching song. (5)
10. See 9 Across.
12. Gershwin possibility (5)
13. See 8 Across.
19. How it does - Three times! (4)
20. The "What are you waiting for?" girl (4)
21. First class seaman returns to this South American resort. (4)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

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For amusement only! Our thanks to Lionel for we know that compiling a crossword puzzle is at least a hundred times more difficult than solving one! Solution further on. Try it after dinner Christmas Day!

READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY :

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Its a pleasure to be able to present the first in our Readers' Portrait Gallery. Response to send in photographs for reproduction has been modest but encouraging, and it is hoped these pictures will encourage others to let us see what they look like! Admittedly, the printing medium is not good, is not conducive to good pictures; even so, we have modest satisfaction in the first selection - and a few surprises, but more of that later.

It is a very human trait, on receiving a friendly letter from a person you have never seen, to form a mental picture of what, possibly, the person looks like. Sometimes one gets quite close - sometimes one gets very wide of the mark! Oh yes indeed.....

Although the photographs have reproduced reasonably well, the wretched captions that should accompany them are largely indecipherable. So, they should read, referring to the pictures on the opposite page:

TOP: BING IN LONDON, OCTOBER, 1973, with LESLIE GAYLOR - NEITHER NEEDING ANY INTRODUCTION!

BOTTOM: PETITE MISS NOOR VAN HEEL, OF MIDDELBURG, HOLLAND. NOOR IS 17 AND WAS "INTRODUCED TO BING" BY HER LATE FATHER.

On this page, therefore, we have a fair span in years of the people who admire Bing to the extent that they subscribe to The International Crosby Circle and thus read BING, though this is not to suggest that Leslie is by any means our eldest subscriber, any more than Noor is the youngest. But, they're a fine example of the wide appeal of Mr. Crosby.

Leslie Gaylor has now met Bing more times than he can remember; he seems to have a sixth sense about Bing's arrival in London! True he often has "inside information" from the Crosby office, but he also keeps an ear on the radio, and an eye on the newspapers. On the slightest clue that Bing is in London Leslie is off that Isle of Wight like a shot out of a gun. Readers will recall that in September and October there was considerable speculation and puzzlement as to whether Bing was, in fact, coming over for golf or business purposes. Various "spottings" were announced, but the most we saw was a nice little story in The Daily Mail about an interview with our ageless hero in the VIP lounge at London Airport! Well, here is evidence that Bing got further than Heathrow. There is no doubting his pleasure at meeting Leslie again, either. And doesn't he look well and fit! Leslie prevailed upon a press photographer to take this picture - and Les tells me much amusement was afforded he and Bing when it was suggested that Bing gets in touch with Leslie when in Britain, rather than vice-versa!

The name of Gaylor is constantly in the newspapers and on the radio singing the praises of Bing; he has more request records of Bing played surely than anyone, and of course, Leslie was very prominently concerned with the production of the Parkinson TV show.

As for the youthful Noor Van Heel - here is one of my surprises! I had exchanged several letters with Noor - who writes beautiful English incidentally - under the impression that "she" was a Dutchman! How tickled she must have been when I addressed her as "Mynheer Van Heel" so many times! It must have been a sad time for Noor and her family when her father died just a year ago. She tells me that it was through her

(Please turn to page 52)

ABOVE: [illegible]

[illegible]

SHOPPE REOPENS

FRED REYNOLDS, 69 Heathmere Ave. Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RQ is anxious to obtain two 10" LPs of Bing - old ones, of course:

BRUNS LA 8513 - COLE PORTER SONGS:
BRUNS LA 8600 - VICTOR HERBERT SONGS.

Fred would be grateful for any assistance. And for all those new readers, new collectors to whom the 10" LPs are a bit of a mystery - MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR COPY OF THE LPography. It contains full details of all of them.

EDDIE ALLAN, 16 Kirk Street, Edinburgh, EH6 5DT is equally anxious to obtain a copy of the album THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS - and I don't blame him, for this must be about the best of Bing's "modern" LPs. I have a feeling this may still be available from WORLD RECORDS and told Eddie to try there... that by the way, is the new title of WORLD RECORD CLUB, and the records will, in future, be listed in the pukka EMI catalogue. Write to Eddie if you can help.

+++

I HOPE MOST READERS KNOW THAT THE "HIGH SOCIETY" FILM-TRACK ALBUM IS STILL READILY AVAILABLE FROM EMI IN RECORD, CASSETTE, OR CARTRIDGE FORM. WHAT A SALE THIS HAS HAD!

OH!

OH! Oh! dear! What a shock - an unpleasant one for some - when that "Italian" LP of "Louis Armstrong: Bing Crosby on Stage" turned up in England - in TESCO's, the supermarket, forsooth! A real nasty turn-up for those who had already expended close on £3 in obtaining the album from abroad.

I must confess I've long made a practice of calling in Tesco's when on my record rounds! And what is more, I've been very pleased indeed with some of the albums I've picked up there at virtually give-away prices. For example, I obtained Los Andesdel Paraguay there and it turned out to be one of the best records in the idiom I have.

But I never dreamed I would pick up a Bing/Louis album there - and that's for sure!

I think a more "expensive" label would have carried a cautionary note about the recording quality of the contents. For its origins its fairly good and a remarkable bargain especially at 55p. Most of us have heard these two versions of "Lazybones" on tape, but as far as I can recall, I hadn't heard the version of "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" by Bing before. And except for some chuckles and announcements from Bing that is the Crosby content. But as it also carries Venuti, Teagarden, Nick Fatool and other legendary musicians it becomes quite a unique recording. It dates from a broadcast concert in New York in February, 1949. How the recording meandered its way down through the years to end up on an Italian LP and one sold at our own Tesco's will, I suppose, remain a mystery. The Tesco label is, of course, Windmill - and the number WMD 190. No stereo-enhancing has been attempted.

New member, Mr. A. Ward, of 5, Warwick Street, Sheffield, S10 1LX, Yorks badly wants the Ace of Hearts "Old Masters" albums, Vols. 1, 2 and 3 if anyone can help. I've told Mr. Ward that it is almost certain that these three albums will in the near future almost certainly be reissued, perhaps on Coral. On the other hand, I know there are shops, certainly in London, which still have these albums.

WALT HAMNETT, 329 Maidenhead Rd., Windsor, Berks, SL4 5SE has picked up a copy of the HIGH TOR LP he is willing to dispose of - says it has no outer cover and is NOT mint. I know this is in demand, so - write to Walt. if interested.

(Cont. from p.48)
father's interest in dance music - Paul Whiteman being well to the fore - that she first heard, and fell in love with, the Crosby voice. Noor is not one of the younger people who might tend to write-off the Whiteman days on account of their scant vocal choruses. She loves those early vocals and the young Bing Crosby.

Continental record companies are not so conservative, it seems, as their British counterparts and Latin-American albums of the kind I like are much more freely available there. Hence, Noor has been kind enough to obtain several excellent albums for me in this idiom - and in return she has "Call Me Lucky" and some rare Crosby. A very happy exchange. Noor's full address if you would care to write to her is:

Miss Noor Van Heel,
Seislaan 14,
Middelburg,
HOLLAND.

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THREE MORE OF OUR MEMBERS ARE PICTURED ON THE PAGE OPPOSITE. HERE AGAIN THE CAPTIONS ARE FROM FROM DISTINCT, ALAS, AND THEY SHOULD READ AS FOLLOWS:

LEFT: Mrs. Joan Dunnington, Church Lane, Saleby, Alford, Lincs; an informal study in the garden where, one presumes, Joan was watching her husband at work! A pretty picture.

CENTRE: Norman Toogood, 91 Chiltern Green, Millbrook Estate, Southampton, - or is it the Meditarranean? Norman's afloat, anyway.

RIGHT: Miss Pauline Newling, 58 Firs Craig, 10th Floor, Cantril Farm, Liverpool. A studio study, in pensive mood.

==========

Like so many others, it was Joan Dunnington's firm intention to meet Bing this year; she had prevailed upon her husband to use their holiday for this purposes. Alas, Bing's mysterious movements ruled it out so Joan has to bide her time.

Pauline Newling is single, and we had the pleasure of meeting her at the Leeds party when she made the long journey by rail and stayed overnight. We recently printed the letter Pauline had received from Bing wherein, among other things, he complimented her on a poem she had specially written about San Francisco. Pauline "fell" for the Crosby magic when she was 16. How long ago was that? Well, Pauline has told me but I'm playing the gallant and keeping it to myself! But you can make up your own minds from the charming photograph that she let us have for printing.

++++++++++

Norman Toogood, I suggest; presents a lovely devil-may-care, swashbukling picture! And dressed to kill, too! Norman was good enough to supply a few biographical notes to accompany his picture. They read as follows:

> Born 1918! A vintage year for Crosby enthusiasts! Out of school 1932. Inevitably errand boy; later drove a horse and cart, after which became a very junior assistant for a retail tailor. Outbreak of war finished that when the TA to which I belonged was mobilised in a hurry. Served with my County's regiment and Field Security in Africa, Italy, Austria, Germany and France reaching Staff Sergeant. Invalided out in 1947 have worked since as (a) postman (b) tram-driver, (c) bus conductor, (d) tobacco worker and, for the past 18 years with the Owen Owen Department store in Southampton. Hobbies over the past 25 years- other than Bing - have been concerned with flying - I was a studio pilot with a local club back in 1954/3. These days, however, my one and only hobby, pastime and pleaseure are "All Things Bing" - and literally ALL my leizure time is devoted to this subject in one form or another.

OUR WARM THANKS TO THESE READERS FOR STARTING OFF THE FEATURE IN BRILLIANT STYLE.

PRIVATE STUDIO PORTRAIT OF
MISS PAULINE HEWLING, FROM
LIVERPOOL.

HERE, THERE AND —

AND LITERALLY ELSEWHERE.....RANDOM NOTES, WITH A FLASHBACK OR TWO TO LEEDS....

RALPH HARDING, our ebullient colleague who among other things, usually produces THE CROSBY COLLECTOR, was persuaded to say a few words at Leeds in the wake of yours truly, Reg Bristo. Another Leeds item we wouldn't want to miss, incidentally. And to those readers who also read the COLLECTOR (an excellent idea) and are puzzled at its non-appearance for about a year, Ralph revealed that its non-appearance has been due solely to his being snowed under, principally producing that epic publication on Bing's films, THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD. He assured us - though it didn't pass unnoticed that Ralph sat down for his address - that the Collector will be out again, either for Christmas or shortly afterwards. This is welcome news.

.....

Apparently I move around when addressing the Crosby admirers! A trait I was unaware of until Ralph suggested it was because I wanted to present a moving target - and, therefore, more difficult to hit!

.....

I was able to break my long journey to Leeds this year by the courtesy of Fred Reynolds and enabled thereby to spend a couple of nights renewing personal contact with Fred, his fabulous equipment and equally fabulous collection. But one thing still baffles me slightly: Fred has a stereo outfit in his car and I confidently looked forward to a nice Crosby selection on our way up to the motorway. But the cassettes must have been hastily gathered for the truth is we had everyone EXCEPT Bing! Indeed, at one time Fred and I were roaring our heads off with Andy Stewart in THE FARMER'S BOY - you know -

To reap and mow, and plough and sow, and be a farmer's BOOOOOY etc.

A little unseemly, but good fun - and a little inappropriate perhaps on our way to a Crosby convention!

.....

And talking of motorways, I understand that Ralph Harding, together with the luckless Charlie Tupper as passenger, broke down on the return journey to London and spent an entire night laid-up on the hard shoulder. Personally I'd feel a lot safer that way than driving with Ralph! But, they got home all right eventually.

..... Isle of Wight, Leslie Gaylor: but there is another Crosby fan who gets nice letters from Bing on the Isle....Mrs. I. Orr, of East Cowes....

I'm returning to that new Coral album DAYDREAMING without apology. What a beauty... an album that emphasises the mainly puerile nature of today's hit parade. I do hope you will listen again to those lovely orchestral accompaniments. Listen, for instance, to the glorious trombones in "Between a Kiss and a Sigh", the wonderful strings of "Maybe". As a matter of fact, those lovely melodic trombones are quite a feature of John Scott Trotter's performances. Beautiful sound.

.....Met Bert Morton, of Brewood, Staffs, for the first time at Leeds. What a pity this is only once a year and the briefest of chats is only possible with so many to chat to. Still, its better than nothing.

.....very, very, few of you are NOT going to be flabbergasted at the LPography! The number of albums on Bing is mind-boggling, and I thought I was well versed in them. I have had a big surprise, I can assure you. This is undoubtedly a terrific piece of compilation by Bert Bishop and John Bassett. I have only printed and prepared it - and that has been a back-breaking arduous, unremitting operation. What hours went into the

...

research hardly bears thinking about.

.....To say it is PRICELESS isn't trite, its true! One just couldn't put a price on the labour involved. That must literally true. But of course, this dedicated work is undertaken by all concerned as a boon to Crosby collectors - and the price is merely to cover the actual expenses incurred in its printing. The cover, for instance, is a fine montage of many of Bing's albums and is most striking - and interesting.

.....We had to put a limit on the numbers of copies printed, for obvious reasons. There can be no doubt that this number is going to be snapped up. If you have reserved, you are guaranteed a copy. If you have NOT reserved write immediately. It is the kind of book - 80 plus pages, by the way - that you will be able to pick up and browse through almost without limit. You will find albums you never even dreamed were issued.... do not cuss yourself in a couple of months time when you find all have been sold.

.....talking of mamoth compilations, I feel we didn't give overdue attention to the book of Bing's films, mainly produced by Fred Reynolds and published by Ralph Harding. Here again, it was a fantastic project which must have extended over the better part of ten years work. I know that on one occasion a complete batch of proofs was actually lost in the post and all that painstaking work had to be done all over again! Not much use publishing this complete work on all the films Bing has appeared in for I believe it is now sold out.

.....By the way, in case some readers got scared off, the remaining few of The A to Z of Bing Crosby, the alphabetical listing of Bing's records, accompanists, and vocal partners, have not been entirely snapped up. So, if you want a copy you have every chance: £1 post paid from Reg Bristo. Mind you, I think few readers have NOT got a copy now. But there it is, if you haven't.

.....BUT THE PART FOUR COPIES OF "THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY" DISCOGRAPHY THAT I HAD DID GO WITHIN A WEEK OF MY MENTIONING THEM A COUPLE OF ISSUES BACK. THIS IS IN PARTICULAR REPLY TO SEVERAL READERS. SORRY.....BUT THEY WENT STRICTLY TO THOSE WHO WROTE IN AND IN THAT ORDER. AND IN REPLY TO OTHER READERS, I JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN A COMPREHENSIVE NEW EDITION OF THE COMPLETE WORK WILL BECOME AVAILABLE.

....A WARM WELCOME to several new readers: ROY DODDS of Chesterfield; REN JAMES, of Gateshead; M. Maublanc of St. Germain-En-Lay, France; Mr. A.V.Pattison of Strensall, Yorks; Ken Smith, of Southampton; Mr. F. Toner of Tottenham, London; and Mr. B.K. Underwood of Letchworth, Herts. I'm sure they will find the Circle a friendly one and that their interest in Bing Crosby and his multifarious activities will be stimulated.

.....The November issue of FIELD AND STREAM - a book costing 25p and devoted to the pursuits of fishin' and huntin', has a great picture of Bing on its front cover, and a big story inside: BING CROSBY - MR. HUNTIN' AND FISHING. Multifarious activities, indeed!

.....The subject of hunting wildlife is a very thorny one, as most readers are aware. Thorny because a lot of people just cannot bear the thought of wild animals being hunted to death and killed just for sport. I'm one of those - but it could be argued that is because I've never had the chance to go huntin! Be that as it may - and to prove that we do not deliberately withold adverse views on this aspect of Bing's activities, I print the following letter I've received:

> "I suppose that to most of his fans, of which I am one of the biggest, Bing can do no wrong. But how can he represent himself at the Texaco Pro-Am in aid of the World Wildlife Fund and then be so trigger-happy with his shotgun shooting quail at Flashing Meal. Its just not "on" for me. I'm sorry Bing, but I don't take to killing wildlife just for the hell of it."
>
> Jack Feather (Keighley).

.....To which I can only add "Hmmmmmmm..."

BING CROSBY ACCOMPANIED BY

No 21

THE LEGEND ON BING'S RECORD LABELS.

THE "ONCE-UPON-A-TIME"

"Once Upon A Time"? Reg Bristo's made another bloomer here I can hear you saying -- or some of you! Bing never recorded with "Once-Upon-a-Time", you will be exclaiming. Whoever are they, anyway? Groups today seem to lie awake at nights thinking up the most unlikely names - Paper Lace, Led Zeppelin, New World, Dawn and many more come readily to mind. Their names HAVE to be rather bizarre in an effort to match the "music" they produce. Anyway, let's leave the cryptic title a mystery for a little while longer.

This is No. 21 in the series as you can see, and this tells me that with four issues a year I have been working on this feature now for about five years! Eloquent testimony, surely, to the incredible scope of Bing's recording career. The end is in sight but it will run on for a bit yet.

We have learned that close on a hundred musical directors, instrumentalists, e.g. pianists, guitarists, and other units have accompanied Bing - a formidable figure indeed. Yet there must have been a time when it was easy to believe that Bing recorded with just one illustrious leader, the towering John Scott Trotter. Towering, that is, in the Crosby career. And it is true that it was with John Scott that Bing made the largest single group of records. Behind Trotter was, of course, Victor Young with also a tremendous contribution to Crosby accompaniments.

Speaking of John Scott Trotter it is timely to note that an album has just appeared in the shops of his re-creation of the Hal Kemp sound, a modern recording. This is on the Coral label. The Hal Kemp band was very prominent and highly regarded in the very early 30's - indeed, in the late 20s. But Hal came to an untimely end in a car accident and though the band struggled on for a time it eventually folded. J.S.T. was pianist and arranger in the outfit and it was his fine work with this band which drew Bing's attention to him.

However, that is a small digression which should, nevertheless, be of interest to Bing admirers. And it is time to explain the "Once-Upon-A-Time" aspect of this current feature. Although Bing made hundreds of records with these legendary figures, there are a large number of instances where Bing made just one two-sided record and no more with an outfit. The grouping of them under the heading, therefore, solves a slight problem for the completeness of this feature, "Bing Crosby Accompanied By....." I hasten to add, too, that there were many legendary names among these "once-only" accompanists.

Clearly Bing made a practice of giving a "helping hand" to musicians who had worked with him in earlier days and usually these came, not unnaturally, from the Whiteman personnel. Frank Trumbauer, Jack Teagarden, Joe Venuti and others come to mind. To be on record with Crosby could hardly fail to give a boost to a new career as leader, and it seems Bing was ever-willing to extend this assistance. The following list, therefore, contains some very famous and familiar names -- and some that are not quite so famous and familiar to us. The names, and the two sides only that Bing made with their accompaniment make quite interesting reading and study as you will see on the next page.

THE ONE-TIME ONLY ACCOMPANISTS OF BING ON RECORD

The dates, of course, are the recording dates and to forestall the lynx-eyed discography browsers I must say that there are other "one-time" accompanists but they have already been dealt with in earlier issues, e.g. Duke Ellington in the Jazzmen, Harry Owens in the Hawaiian, Helen Crawford in the Organists and so on:

DAVE BARBOUR & HIS ORCHESTRA: "I've Got To Fall in Love Again/Shanghai" 8.6.51

I feel I should know something about Dave - but I'm afraid I don't.

LES BROWN & HIS BAND OF RENOWN: "All She'd Say Was 'Umh-Hum'/She is the Sunshine of Virginia". 21.6.54

This was a very well known band; you will recall it was the outfit that Dixie engaged for her surprise birthday party for Bing, as recounted in "Call Me Lucky".

HARRY BARRIS, piano: "At Your Command". 24.6.31.

Harry, of course, made many records with Bing as a Rhythm Boy but so far as I can see this was the only one with Harry as accompanist.

ROY BARGY & HIS ORCHESTRA: "Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle". 4.2.49.

Roy was a one-time colleague in the Whiteman Band, a celebrated pianist. This record arose only because of Bing's appearance on the Jimmy Durante club show.

DON CLARK & HIS HOTEL BILTMORE ORCHESTRA: "I've Got the Girl". 18.10.26

The record, of course, widely believed to be Bing's first commitment to wax and therefore justiably of tremendous historical interest - tho' any day it wouldn't surprise me to hear that an earlier one had turned up! This occurred, I imagine, because Don needed a vocal and gave the two itinerant troubadours a date. Bing sang a duet with Al Rinker on this, of course.

ORCHESTRA DIRECTED BY NATHAN VAN CLEAVE: "On the 10.10 From Ten-Ten-Tennessee/Zing a Little Song". 8.5.52

This odd "date", no doubt, because Van Cleave directed the orchestra in the film. At least, that's what I think!

RALPH CARMICHAEL & HIS ORCHESTRA: "Christmas Dinner Country Style/Do You Hear What I Hear?". 21.10.63

Know nothing of Ralph; but its a very popular seasonal record.

IVAN DITMAR piano: "Dear Old Girl/Just One Word of Consolation". 12.8.36

Know nothing of Ivan, either. This is largely a kind of "barber-shop quartet" record.

KEN DARBY SINGERS: "Sunday, Monday or Always/If you Please" 2.7.43

Bing made many records in association with Ken Darby orchestra and singers but on this one occasion there was no musical accompaniment instrumentally of any kind owing to a musician's strike then prevailing.

RAY ELLIS & HIS ORCHESTRA: "Tower of Babel" 8.63

A special charity performance.

ROBERT FARNON & HIS ORCHESTRA: "Let's Not be Sensible/Team Work" 9.61

Made for the sound-track of "Road to Hong-Kong" in England.

ERNIE FREEMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA: "What Do We do With the World?/Step to the Rear" 10/67.

One of Bing's latter-day "with-it" records.

THE IPANA TROUBADOURS: "I'll Get By/Rose of Manadalay" 28.12.28

One at the other end of the scale; the Troubadours were, I believe, a recording alias for a Sam Lanin Orchestra.

LOUIS JORDAN & HIS TIMPANI 5: "My Baby Said 'Yes'/Your Socks Don't Match". 26.7.44

Elegant coloured leader - and that's all I know of him.

JOHNNY KEATING & ORCHESTRA: "How Green Was My Valley/Far From Home". 9.5.66

Another latter-day effort not, curiously enough, issued in this country. This was a great pity, I feel, for the first title is an excellent number but not to be confused with a song of the same title popular many years ago.

GRADY MARTIN & HIS SLEW FOOT FIVE: "Just a Little Lovin'/Till the End of the World". 23.3.52

A real cracker of a record with this oddly-named outfit. Pity Bing never made more of this type with this outfit. I love this record.

LIONEL NEWMAN & ORCHESTRA: "Say One For Me/Say One for Me" - second time with Debbie Reynolds. 6.3.59

Lionel Newman was another musical film director. Was, and is.

ALFRED NEWMAN & ORCHESTRA: "Who Gave You the Roses?/We Meet Again". 23.9.54

Know nothing of Alfred, I'm afraid.

SY OLIVER & HIS ORCHESTRA: "I Didn't Slip, I wasn't Pushed, I fell/So Tall A Tree" 8.4.50

No reason for this particular date so far as I know. Bing was still working out his long-term Decca contract.

PADRE CHORISTERS: "Peace Prayer of Saint Francis/Blessing of Saint Francis" 4.11.54

This just had to be a once-only date! One of Bing's more unusual and reverent renderings. Quite a remarkable recording.

DON REDMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA: "Lawd You Made the Night Too Long". 13.4.32

An early effort of Bing's just as he was on his rocket-like journey to the top - here as you know, with the Boswell Sisters. Don Redman was a considerable figure in the band world; indeed, he is credited with the original conception of a large band with equally-balanced reed, brass and rhythm sections.

SPORTSMENS' GLEE CLUB: "People will say we're in love/Oh! What a Beautiful Morning. 23.8.43

This was, once more, a purely "vocal accompaniment" because of a recording strike by musicians.

HARRY SOSNICK & ORCHESTRA: "Shepherd Serenade/Do You Care?" 24.10.41

Ah, this is an odd-man-out on the new DAYDREAMING Coral album. Pure John Scott Trotter style.

Cont. over.....

FRANKIE TRUMBAUER & HIS ORCHESTRA: "From Monday On/Mississippi Mud" 20.1.28

The first title was not issued; the second was yet another version of this famous Rhythm Boys numbers, this time as a duet with Trumbauer. Frankie is of course, somewhat a legand as a saxophone player with a beautiful tone and was in the Whiteman band with Bing. As a matter of fact, this record seems to have been made whilst they were still under the Whiteman aegis. Frankie was also a composer of certain quality - "Choo-Choo", the train-effect instrumental, and "Bouncing Ball", a colossal exercise for a reed section, are two of his better-known efforts.

JACK TEAGARDEN & HIS ORCHESTRA: "The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid/ The Birth of the Blues". 26.5.41

Another famous instrumentalist, trombonist Jack, also well considered as a vocalist himself, leading his own band to put over this big production number from one of Bing's best films, with Mary Martin, of course.

PAUL TAYLOR CHORISTERS: "Darling Nellie Gray/Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". 25.4.38

Another completely choral record.

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These are, then, as far as I can ascertain, the once-upon-a-time only accompanists to Bing on commercial records. Quite an interesting list, I feel. There is rather an oddity that might have been added to this list - the name of Percy Faith and his Orchestra who did indeed record three numbers with Bing:

"Say One for Me/The Secret of Christmas/I Couldn't Care Less" 6.3.59

For some inplicable reason these records were never issued. Indeed, Bing subsequently recorded all three songs shortly afterwards - with a different musical director ! This was - FRANKIE DE VOL & HIS ORCHESTRA, though once again there is some confusion indicated for the name of Lionel Newman has been associated with at least one of these records.

For the benefit of newer readers, personalities dealt with in previous issues of this series of Bing's accompanists on record are:

1. John Scott Trotter.
2. Victor Young.
3. Paul Whiteman.
4. Buddy Cole.
5. Vic Schoen.
6. Gus Arnheim.
7. Dorsey Bros.
8. Bob Crosby.
9. Bob Scobey.
10. Lennie Hayton.
11. George Stoll.
12. Billy May.
13. The McIntires, Lani & Dick, and Harry Owens.
14. Perry Botkin.
15. Russ Morgan.
16. Helen Crawford, Eddie Dunstedter & other organists.
17. Joseph Lilley.
18. Bill Justis & Nelson Riddle.
19. The Jazzmen: Buddy Bregman.
    Eddie Condon.
    Duke Ellington.
    Count Basie.
    Lionel Hampton.
    Bob Scobey.
    Joe Venuti.
20. Los Senors: Xavier Cugat.
    The Bando da Lua.

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It would be nice to think some readers have carefully retained all these listings; it will be a discography for them in a different way.

WE GET MAIL, TONS OF IT...John Bassett and I, Reg Bristo. But we did NOT get, alas, some of the "regional" reports we look forward to, with the rest of our readers. Richard Muirhead from Scotland, sad to say, was too late with his despatch...but he did, of course, wish everyone a Happy Christmas from Scotland...we had a lovely letter from Rio Briggs; but again, we did NOT have that despatch from the East Yorks Tykes we have come to expect! Come on, what happened to Mike Crampton and Victor Gilmore, we plaintively ask?
Mrs. Briggs wrote a delightful letter in which she disclaimed being a diehard Bing fan but was happy to go along with Frank. She goes along to the Leeds meetings, too, where she is a vivacious and decorative addition to the gathering! I'm waiting to see how she gets on when we engage a band! Thanks for ALL the letters we have received - and our regrets if they have not been answered, or published here. Keep 'em coming!

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The two TESCO SUPERMARKETS I can reach (Sheiks willing!) have dozens of copies of the BING/LOUIS ON STAGE album....The PAPER MOON album mentioned earlier on p.10 by Bert Bishop is in the EMI catalogue for November. In addition to Bing's JUST ONE MORE CHANCE it contains tracks by Paul Whiteman, Tommy Dorsey, Johnny Hamp, Ozzie Nelson, Leo Reisman, Jimmy Grier (with a vocal by Pinky Tomlin, and another with a vocal by Donald Novis, Dick Powell and others. The price is £2.14p. Apart from the Bing track, which we all have around a dozen times I imagine, the album does look attractive to those who loved the stars of the 30's generally.

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I MUST SAY I AM UP THE POLE OVER THE TOTEM ALBUMS (up the pole, see?). I have had copies from LARRY KINER, 7554 132nd Ave. N.E. Kirkland, Washington, 98033, USA. I see they may be available from Dave Carey, as mentioned earlier, but if in any difficulty write to Larry - he has a tremendous catalogue of old-time radio show albums. The Bing records are truly great and are easily the best reproduction of original radio shows I've ever heard. They include, naturally, the unexpurgated "commercials" for Philco radios &c. Yet, because Bing tends to "take the Mick" out of them they are quite amusing. And on the side where Jolson guests one certainly gets the best of both worlds with Al singing his greatest hits on Bing's 1947 radio programme. One of the sides is, in fact, the very first Philco Radio programme that Bing gave and has that additional hitoric interest. I recommend these albums, wherever you get them from. The transcription really is good.

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JOHN JOYCE, 16, The Square, New Invention, Willenhall, Staffs writes: I have several privately-recorded LPs from the Crosby shows, etc which I want to sell. Condition is good (only) but there is some rare stuff on them. Would sell for £1 each, with 25p of that going to ICC funds. Discs include unissued material I also have all Bing's Philco shows with guests, professiinally recorded on 7" tapes at 7½ ips. Mint copies at £2 each - about 40 tapes in all. Also an edited, Bing only, 7" tape from early Hollywood Palace shows. Sound on these is HI-FI. On all of them, in fact, and has to be heard to be believed.

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I'm sure I'm in a majority of one - or am I? - when I say I am somewhat dismayed at the news that an album of Bing's "fluffs" on recordings is to be released in, and from, America. While granting these have a certain collector-appeal - and indeed, some are hilarious - I still feel its rather unethical to propagate these slips

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THE VERY UNDERSTANDING ACCEPTANCE OF THE NECESSITY TO RAISE THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION TO £1.30p, with overseas equivalents, is keenly appreciated. Indeed, many members have gone above £1.30p to assist the funds and there is encouraging evidence that the ICC and its magazine will not go under from lack of finance. The increase does not put us in a highly solvent state but should keep us floating! Thank you members - and well done. Please continue to renew promptly on receiving the "reminder"; it is a very big help in planning issues. Incidentally, to save my time, and to save postage, I will not ACKNOWLEDGE subs - the fact that you receive BING means it has been received.

HURRY! - THE LPOGRAPHY IS READY! AS YOU HAVE READ. THE BOOK WILL BE POSTED BY RETURN SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE IT IN TIME TO BROWSE OVER AFTER CHRISTMAS DINNER! Will all those who have reserved please remit - and those who have already paid in order that no mistakes are made. Not remit again - just send a postcard! !

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C H R I S T M A S Q U I Z ! - Our quiz in the September issue prove surprisingly popular; it was pointed out, however, that Bing has appeared at the London Palladium. The meaning of the question was, however, has Bing appeared there as a top-of-the-bill artist. The answer is still "No" tho' he has appeared there as a guest of others - and a highly appreciated guest, too. Try this set of questions:

1. Leaving out mixed choirs, which four ladies sang with Bing on the MERRY CHRISTMAS album (LAT 8556)?
2. Apart from Britain & America, two other countries are clearly present on this same album: which are they?
3. Which English choral society sings "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen" on a Crosby album?
4. Name the three leaders who have accompanied Bing's "White Christmas" on record.
5. Was the first historic recording of White Christmas recorded anywhere near Christmas?
6. CHRISTMAS ROUND THE WORLD album: four other countries represented APART fromas? America - which?
7. What choir was obviously present in the studio for this album (original broadcast that is?)
8. Which other choir has been associated with the big-selling "White Christmas"?

(Answers upside down bottom of page! Don't look at albums first - hard luck if you don't have them!)

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Regret line No. 6 on PRECEDING page has been overprinted. It should have read - What happened to the East Yorks Tykes Alf Farrow, Frank Briggs and Victor Gilmore!

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WELL, WHATEVER THE OMINOUS SIGNS AROUND US AS WE CONCLUDE THIS ISSUE, JOHN BASSETT AND I, AT LEAST, HAVEN'T GONE ON STRIKE! WE HOPE THIS ISSUE DIVERTS YOU AROUND CHRISTMAS

DON'T FORGET THOSE CORALS! LASTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO RE-ECHO WHAT JOHN SAID AT THE START: WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS 1974 and may the Bing cause continue to excite and intrigue us.

We think especially of those who may be alone, ill, or otherwise oppressed at this normally happy time of the year; may these troubles soon pass.

H A P P Y C H R I S T M A S !

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Referring to Fred Reynolds requirement of 10" Brunswicks, we said they were "old" records! This doesn't mean Fred wants worn-out ones - in fact, he naturally wants them in excellent condition.

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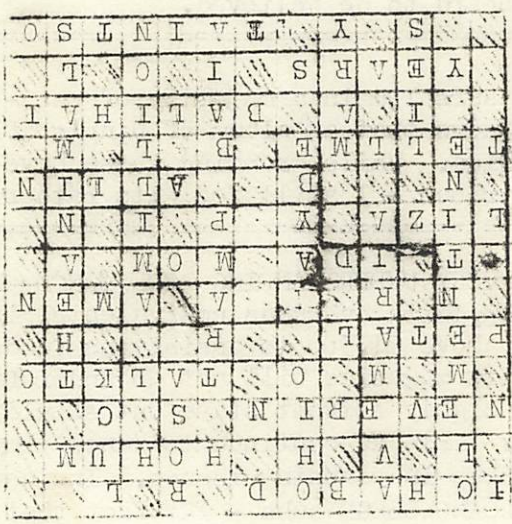
QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Four - Andrews Sisters and Carole Richards.
2. Ireland and Hawaii.
3. Dedham Choral Socy: Christmas Round the World.
4. John Scott; Trotter; Paul Weston; Joseph Lilley.
5. Could hardly have been further - 29 May!
6. Canada, Holland, Italy, France.
7. The Norman Luboff.
8. The Ken Darby.